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Amid India row, ICC hints at Pak being CT host

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 15 NOVEMBER 2024 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 12 JUMADA I, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 289 | Pages: 8

Cabinet decides to set up SIT to probe Covid scam

SIT to just probe irregularities, not recovery of public money

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday decided to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the alleged irregularities in the purchase of equipment and medicines during Covid pandemic when the BJP was in power in the State, based on the interim report submitted by Justice Michael D'Cunha Commission.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said an Inspector General of Police rank officer will head the SIT. However, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will decide the officers in the SIT.

"Once the SIT comes into existence, it will start working and the moment it felt the need to file FIR, they will do it and start investigation," Patil said.

DyCM DK Shivakumar with CM Siddaramaiah attend Children's Day event at the KPCC office in Bengaluru on Thursday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

He said the final report, once submitted, will also be forwarded to the SIT to investigate.

According to him, the SIT will only probe the irregularities and crime and not the recovery of the public money.

"The recovery aspect will not be taken up by this SIT. The committee may give its recommendation on recovery. The recovery can be done by a separate agency of the Department of Revenue because it will be like a recovery of revenue dues," Patil said.

The panel had recommended the prosecution of the then Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa and former health minister B Sriramulu.

"Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) kits that were available for Rs 330 per unit in Karnataka and Mumbai were imported from foreign countries in lakhs for Rs 2,117 per kit. They purchased outdated medicines at double to triple the prevailing rate from blacklisted companies," he alleged. *—PTI*

Cabinet asks Lokayukta to probe mining violations

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday decided to ask the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Lokayukta to register cases against 10 mining firms for alleged violations. Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil, said no case was registered against these companies for alleged irregularities and other violations. In a separate development, the cabinet also decided to reopen investigation into the six separate mining cases, which the CBI had declined to investigate. The accused in these six separate mining cases are not known. *—PTI*

Student gangraped by 3 people in Delhi school bus

NEW DELHI, 13 NOV

A school student was allegedly sexually assaulted in a school bus in Shahdara's Anand Vihar area and police have booked the vehicle's driver, conductor and a school attendant, an official said on Wednesday. The private school filed a complaint and the statement of the parents regarding the incident that happened when the girl was heading to her home in Indira Puram in Ghaziabad, the official said. "The parents however, did not come forward to give details of the incident and wrote a complaint for further legal action," according to Delhi Police. *—PTI*

Tulsi Gabbard is new director of US Intelligence

WASHINGTON DC, 14 NOV

US President-elect Donald Trump on Thursday announced that Tulsi Gabbard, a former Democrat and the first-ever Hindu elected to the US Congress, would serve as Director of National Intelligence in his second term. A four-term Congresswoman, 2020 presidential candidate and NYT bestselling author, Gabbard is a veteran with three deployments to war zones in the Middle East and Africa. In August, Gabbard formally endorsed Trump for a second term and soon after began serving as co-chair of his transition team. *—PTI*

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IndiGo's Kolkata flight gets hoax bomb threat

RAIPUR, 14 NOV

An IndiGo flight from Nagpur to Kolkata made an emergency landing in Raipur on Thursday following a bomb threat, which later turned out to be a hoax. The aircraft, carrying 187 passengers and six crew members, landed at Swami Vivekananda Airport shortly after 9am after a passenger alerted the crew to a supposed bomb on board. In response to the threat, the flight was diverted to Raipur where it was placed in an isolation bay for immediate security checks. Local police and a bomb squad were dispatched to the airport, leading to a thorough inspection of the aircraft and passengers' luggage. Upon completion of the investigation, authorities confirmed the bomb threat was false. A passenger who raised the alarm was detained for questioning. The flight resumed its journey to Kolkata at approximately 12pm. *—PTI*

300 FLIGHTS DELAYED

GRAP 3 initiated as Delhi's air worsens

Vehicles ply on the Delhi-Agra National Highway amid smog, in Mathura, on Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Delhi was engulfed in a thick blanket of fog for the second straight day on Thursday, with the air quality index (AQI) recorded in the 'severe' category, raising health concerns among residents. The Central Pollution Control Board reported that the AQI at 9am stood at 428, well within the 'severe' range, with 32 out of 39 monitoring stations in the city recording readings above 400. Notable areas affected include Anand Vihar, Ashok Vihar, and IGI Airport.

Visibility at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport dropped, leading to 300 flights being delayed.

With pollution reaching alarming levels, the central pollution watchdog imposed restrictions under the third stage of the GRAP in Delhi-NCR on Thursday, including a ban on construction and demolition activities.

The restrictions will come into force from Friday. Under the third stage of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), all inter-state buses from NCR states -- except electric vehicles, CNG vehicles and BS-VI diesel buses -- will be prohibited from entering Delhi, alongside a stringent ban on construction and demolition activities, suspension of mining-related activities, consideration of shifting to online classes for students up to Class 5 and daily water sprinkling on major roads. Under the third stage of the GRAP, there would be restrictions on the plying of BS-lll petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles in Delhi and the districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar. On Wednesday, the city marked its worst air quality levels of the season, with a 24-hour AQI reaching 418. *—PTI*

VASANTH VIHAR'S AQI TOUCHES 1,300

Delhi's air quality deteriorated to hazardous levels on Thursday with Air Quality Index (AQI) soaring to alarming heights. While the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reported an AQI of 428 at 9 am, Swiss air quality technology company IQAir said that the AQI of Vasant Vihar Block C exceeded 1,300. Dwarka Sector 8 AQI reached 1,051.

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AFSPA back in Manipur amid fresh violence

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

The central government has reintroduced the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in six police station areas of Manipur, including the violence-affected Jiribam. This decision by the Union Home Ministry comes as the region grapples with persistent ethnic strife, which has resulted in over 200 fatalities and thousands displaced since last year.

AFSPA enables the armed forces to operate in "disturbed" areas with extensive powers, including the authority to search, arrest, and open fire as deemed necessary for maintaining public order. The recent notification reinstates AFSPA in Sekmai and Lamsang (Imphal West district), Lamlai (Imphal East district), Jiribam (Jiribam district), Leimakhong (Kangpokpi), and Moirang (Bishnupur).

This renewed enforcement follows an earlier declaration by the Manipur government on 1 October, which imposed AFSPA across the entire state, excluding 19 police station areas that included those now affected. The escalation of violence has been stark; recent conflicts in Jiribam saw 11 suspected militants killed during a gunfight with security forces, while armed groups abducted six civilians, including women and children. *—PTI*

SWEETENING UP CHILDREN'S DAY

On Children's Day, students take part in Krish Mela Gandhi Krishi Vigyana Kendra in Bengaluru's Yelahanka ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Vacate Srirangapatna madrasa: Centre to State

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

The Central government has requested High Court to direct the Mandya district administration and the State government to clear a madrasa operating within the premises of the historic Jama Masjid in Srirangapatna.

The Waqf Board, opposing this move, has claimed the mosque as its property and defended the right to conduct madrasa activities there.

The matter was brought before a division bench headed following a public interest litigation filed by a person named Abhishek Gowda from Kabbalu village in Kanakapura. The petition alleged "unauthorised madrassa activities" within the mosque. Representing the Central government, Additional Solicitor General argued that the Jama Masjid was designated as a protected monument in 1951, yet unauthorised madrasa operations continue there. He noted that concerns over law and order issues have so far prevented any intervention. In defence, lawyers for the State contested this request, stating that the Waqf Board had been recognised as the owner of the property since 1963 and, thus, conducting madrasa activities there is lawful. *—PTI*

Dominica to confer PM with highest civilian award

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

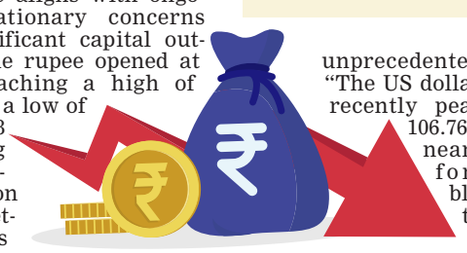
The Commonwealth of Dominica will present its highest civilian award, the Dominica Award of Honour, to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November, 2024, recognising his significant contributions during the Covid-19 pandemic and efforts to strengthen bilateral relations. The honour will be conferred by President Sylvanie Burton at the upcoming India-CARICOM Summit, scheduled to take place in Georgetown, Guyana, from 19 November to 21 November. *—PTI*

Rupee falls to record low again

MUMBAI, 14 NOV

The Indian rupee closed at a record low of 84.43 against the US dollar on Thursday, depreciating by 4 paise. Persistent foreign fund outflows and heightened demand for dollars from investors have weighed heavily on the Indian currency.

Forex traders reported that the downward pressure on the rupee aligns with ongoing inflationary concerns and significant capital outflows. The rupee opened at 84.40, reaching a high of 84.39 and a low of 84.43 during the trading session before settling at its unprecedented low. "The US dollar index recently peaked at 106.76 and is nearing a formidable resistance level at 107.50," commented Praveen Singh, Associate VP of Fundamental Currencies and Commodities at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. He said that the US inflation data showed the core consumer price index surged by 0.3 per cent. *—PTI*



WPI inflation rises to 4-months high

Wholesale price inflation rose to a 4-month high of 2.36 per cent in October as prices of food items, especially vegetables, and manufactured goods turned dearer, as per the government data released on Thursday. The wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation was 1.84 per cent in September 2024. It was (-) 0.26 per cent in October, last year.

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AFTER PROTEST

UP to hold PCS exams in 1 day

PRAYAGRAJ, 14 NOV

The Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) has decided to postpone the Review Officer (RO) and Assistant Review Officer (ARO) examinations, while confirming that the Provincial Civil Services (PCS) preliminary exam for 2024 would be conducted on a single day and according to the previous format. This announcement, made on Thursday, follows the intervention of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath amid growing demands from aspirants.

Commission Secretary Ashok Kumar stated that in response to concerns regarding exam fairness and transparency, a committee will be established to review all aspects of the RO and ARO examinations. This committee is expected to provide recommendations to ensure the integrity of these assessments. Given recent incidents of paper leaks across the country, the Uttar Pradesh government has taken steps to enhance the transparency of the selection processes. The UPPSC had planned to conduct the PCS as well as the RO and ARO exams in multiple shifts in December.

However, following students' concerns, the decision has been reversed, much to the relief of countless candidates preparing for the PCS exam. "Conducting the exam on a single day will instil confidence in the integrity of the examination process," remarked a government spokesperson. While many students expressed their satisfaction with the shift to a single-day exam, those preparing for the RO and ARO examinations voiced their disappointment. Protesters have vowed to continue their demonstrations outside the UPPSC office until a decision is reached regarding the scheduling of the RO and ARO exams. *—PTI*

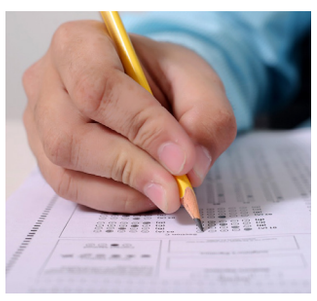

PHOTO: PIXABAY

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CONG'S MIR VOWS LPG CYLINDERS TO 'INFILTRATORS'

RANCHI/MUMBAI, 14 NOV

Congress leader Ghulam Ahmad Mir on Thursday promised that LPG cylinders will be provided in Jharkhand at Rs 450 even for "infiltrators", sparking a political row amid state Assembly elections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi latched on to Mir's promise to hit back at Congress even as BJP dubbed as "anti-national".

Domestic LPG cylinders are available for Rs 860 in Jharkhand where infiltration from Bangladesh is a major poll issue for BJP. "We have promised that we will provide cylinders at Rs 450 from December 1 if our government is formed.... Whether they are Hindus, Muslims, infiltrators – it will be given to all," he said. *—PTI*

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VIOLENCE ERUPTS AS R'THAN IND MLA CANDIDATE ARRESTED

TONK, 14 NOV

Independent MLA candidate Naresh Meena was arrested on Thursday following high drama and escalating violence in which a mob assaulted a PTI reporter and video cameraperson and burnt their camera. The attack, a day after the Congress rebel contesting as an Independent in the bypolls slapped SDM Malpura Amit Chaudhary outside a polling booth in front of hundreds of people, came while the PTI crew was covering a protest following the arrest. PTI reporter and cameraperson were badly injured. *—PTI*

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State announces venue for Sahitya Sammelana

MYSURU, 14 NOV 24

State Agriculture and Mandya District minister N Cheluvaraya Swamy on Thursday ended a row over finding a venue to organise the 87th All India Kannada Sahithya Sammelana. He said the three-day event will be held on a vacant land near Sanjo Hospital in Mandya town from 20 December. The venue, located near the Mysuru-Bengaluru expressway will allow easy movement of participants, the minister said. Mandya district is hosting the event after a gap of 30 years. Though the organisers – Kendra Kannada Sahitya Parishath and Mandya District Kannada Sahitya Parishat – had started preparations for the event three months ago, they had failed to finalise a location in or around Mandya town. —*Salar News*

2 women among 6 Infosys Prize winners this year

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Two women scientists are among the six winners of Infosys Prize 2024 for Economics, Engineering and Computer Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, and Physical Sciences, announced on Thursday by Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) in Bengaluru. The award was instituted by ISF in 2009.The two women, who have been selected for the award this year, are Neena Gupta for Mathematical Sciences and Vedika Khemani for Physical Sciences.Arun Chandrasekhar, Professor, Department of Economics, Stanford University, won the Economics Prize, while Engineering and Computer Science Prize is to be awarded to Shyam Gollakota, Professor, School of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Washington. Infosys Prize 2024 in Humanities and Social Sciences goes to Mahmood Kooria.—***PTI***

BWSSB Wins Prestigious Green Project Award

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has been honoured with the prestigious 'Green Project Award 2024' by the Confederation of Indian Industry- Indian Green Building Council (CII-IGBC). This recognition is a testament to the board's commitment to sustainable water management and climate change mitigation.The award was presented at the International Exhibition Center in Bengaluru. Ram Prasath Manohar, Chairman of BWSSB, accepted the award on behalf of the organization.In his acceptance speech, Manohar highlighted the severe water crisis that Bengaluru faced this summer, exacerbated by the depletion of groundwater sources. He credited the successful mitigation of the crisis to a series of sustainable initiatives implemented under Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.—***Salar News***

New programme for kids with Spinal Muscular Atrophy

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Karnataka's Minister for Medical Education and Skill Development, Sharan Prakash Patil, inaugurated an innovative program on Thursday aimed at supporting children diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). The initiative, launched by the Care and Protection of Children Trust (CPCT) in collaboration with the state government, will provide 50 children under 16 years of age in Karnataka with free access to Risdiplam, an advanced oral treatment for SMA, at a private hotel in Bengaluru. Speaking at the event, Minister Patil highlighted the significant impact of SMA on affected families and communities despite its rarity. Since 2016, the state has allocated Rs 75 crore for its treatment. —***Salar News***

Cong, BJP spar over CM's 'horse trading' charge

CM claims Cong MLAs rejected bribes, BJP calls IT 'baseless'

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

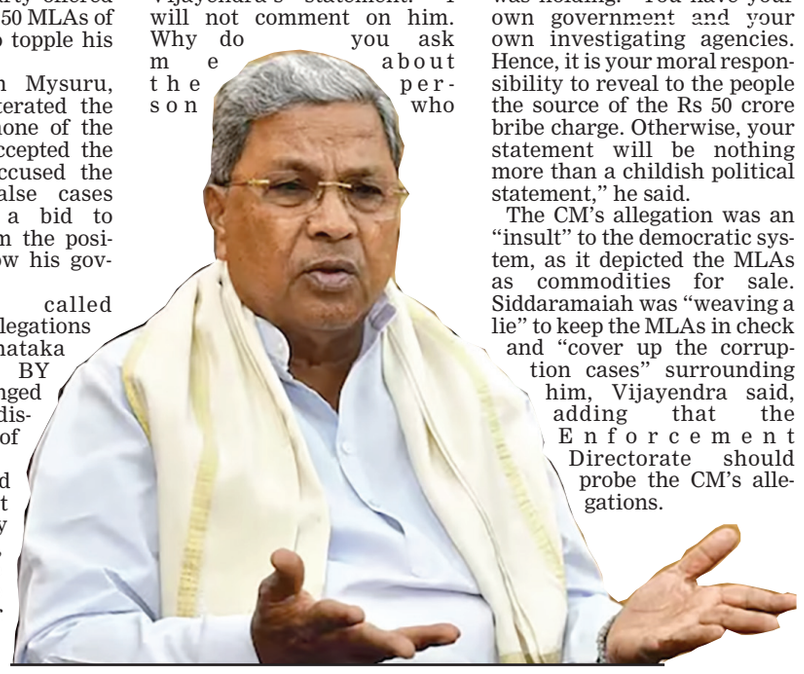
The Congress and the BJP on Thursday engaged in a verbal duel over Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's statement that the saffron party offered Rs 50 crore each to 50 MLAs of the ruling party to topple his government.

At an event in Mysuru, Siddaramaiah reiterated the claim and said "none of the Congress MLAs accepted the offer". He also accused the BJP of filing false cases against him in a bid to "remove him (from the position) and overthrow his government".

The BJP called Siddaramaiah's allegations "baseless". Karnataka BJP President BY Vijayendra challenged Siddaramaiah to disclose the source of his allegation.

Vijayendra alleged that the CM had lost faith in his party MLAs and hence, was levelling false allegations. If the chief minister failed to prove that Rs 50 crore each was offered to 50 Congress MLAs, people will not take him seriously anymore, he said.

Siddaramaiah, however, refused to comment on Vijayendra's statement. "I will not comment on him. Why do you ask me about the person who came (into politics) just recently?" he said.



Vijayendra alleged that Siddaramaiah was behaving in a manner that undermined the dignity of the position he was holding. "You have your own government and your own investigating agencies. Hence, it is your moral responsibility to reveal to the people the source of the Rs 50 crore bribe charge. Otherwise, your statement will be nothing more than a childish political statement," he said.

The CM's allegation was an "insult" to the democratic system, as it depicted the MLAs as commodities for sale. Siddaramaiah was "weaving a lie" to keep the MLAs in check and "cover up the corruption cases" surrounding him, Vijayendra said, adding that the Enforcement Directorate should probe the CM's allegations.

DKS backs CM's claim of ₹50 cr offer to MLAs

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday backed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over his claim that the BJP had offered Rs 50 crore each to 50 Congress MLAs in an attempt to "topple" the State government. Shivakumar, also the Congress State President, said, "BJP indeed lured 50 Congress MLAs with Rs 50 crore each." He said the Congress MLAs were briefed about the BJP's alleged 'Operation Lotus', a term used to describe the BJP's attempts to destabilise governments through horse-trading. "Some of our MLAs informed him about this matter, and he, in turn, shared it with the media," Shivakumar said.

BIG U-TURN

HC suspends Cong MLA's jail term in iron ore case

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Karnataka High Court has ordered the suspension of the seven-year prison sentence of Congress MLA Satish Sail in connection with Belekeri iron ore disappearance case.

Justice M Nagaprasanna gave the direction on Wednesday following an appeal filed by Sail and several other co-accused, who had challenged the verdict of a special court for public representatives.

The special court had previously found Sail and others guilty in multiple cases related to the illegal export of iron ore from Belekeri port. The court had handed prison sentences and imposed fines on the accused for their involvement.

As part of the suspension order, the High Court mandated that Sail and the co-accused must deposit 25 per cent of the penalty amount with the trial court within six weeks. The sentence will remain suspended provided this condition is fulfilled.

The original conviction, delivered on 25 October, implicated Sail and Mallikarjun Shipping Company, which he owns.

The case is part of a broader investigation into illegal iron ore exports from Belekeri port between 2008 and 2013. Sail, who represents Karwar constituency, was charged due to his company's role in facilitating these shipments.

The case originated from a 2010 probe by Karnataka Lokayukta, which discovered about eight lakh tons of illegally transported iron ore from Ballari to Belekeri port. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

- Karnataka High Court has ordered the suspension of the seven-year prison sentence of Congress MLA Satish Sail in connection with Belekeri iron ore disappearance case.

BJP's bogus: DKS refutes reports of 'green cess' on water bills

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Deputy Chief Minister on Children's Day interacted with students in Bengaluru. A student asked Shivakumar what he needed to study in order to become a Chief Minister. Responding thoughtfully, DKS said, "In a democracy, anyone can become anything. You need quality education, reasonable financial stability, and leadership skills to achieve your goals."

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has refuted the reports claiming that State government is considering imposing a green cess on water bills in towns and cities, and termed it "bogus news" spread by Bharatiya Janata Party.This comes after reports claimed that in order to save the eco-sensitive Western Ghats, State Forest Department will be proposing a green cess of "Rs 2 or 3" to raise a corpus fund meant for the conservation of Western Ghats.

Western Ghats are not only a bio-diversity site but are also the source of many rivers including Tunga, Bhadra, Kaveri, Kabini, Hemavati, Krishna, Malaprabha and Ghatprabha. These rivers supply water to many urban and rural areas in the State.

Western Ghats play a significant role in intercepting monsoon winds, resulting in widespread rainfall across the country. —*ANI*

KRISHI MELA

Visitors at Krishi Mela 2024 at Gandhi Krishi Vigyana Kendra in Yelahanka, Bengaluru, on Thursday. The fair will inform visitors and also empower farmers with climate resilient ways to boost yield **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Power cuts in City today

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Select areas of City will face power cuts on Friday as Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) undertakes essential maintenance.

The maintenance work includes infrastructure upgrades, such as improvements for Jalasiri 24x7 water supply project, reconductoring of high-tension lines, servicing of Ring Main Units, repairs and replacements of HT connections, tree trimming and system upgrades. Power interruptions are expected between 10am and 4pm, though some areas may see delays in restoration until around 5pm.

The list of areas likely to experience outages is - BCC Layout, Venkateshwara Layout, 8th Main RPC Layout, Pipeline Road, Nethaji Layout, Attiguppe, Rameshnagar, Vibuthipura, Agalakuppe, Arebommanahalli, Kuluvanahalli, Manne, Sompura Industrial Area, Beeragondanahalli, CT Palya, Doddabele, Kalalugatta, Minnapura Village Limits, Ace Designer, Hasiruvally, Thyamagondlu, Maralakunte, Nelamangala Town, Koppa, Harapanahalli, Narasapura Polanayakanapalli, Bommasandra Jinkapalli, Achaagnapalli, Chitigalagutta, Kuntakindapalli, Banalapalli, Gundamavaripalli, Muthakadalli, Gunnahalli, Madabahalli, Nayandrahalli, and Chanakeshavapura.

—*Salar News*

EX-MUDA CHIEF MARIGOWDA APPEARS BEFORE ED

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

Former Mysuru Urban Development Authority chairman K Marigowda on Thursday appeared before Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning in connection with the MUDA site allotment scam.

Marigowda arrived at the central agency's office in Shantinagar here and recorded his statement.

The ED sleuths had on Wednesday questioned Raichur Congress MP G Kumar Naik, a former IAS officer who had served as Deputy Commissioner of Mysuru district. —*PTI*

Today's welfare measures aim to empower: Nirmala

DHARMASTHALA, 14 NOV

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched a donation distribution program for Self-Help Group members under the Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project, highlighting the welfare measures' positive impact on beneficiaries.

Sitharaman highlighted the impact of institutions like SKDRDP on government policies, resulting in adaptation of models across Karnataka and beyond. NABARD Chairman Shaji K V recognised NABARD's 1982 partnership with SKDRDP. He highlighted SKDRDP's impact on economic empowerment, sustainable agriculture, and community development in southern Karnataka."The insights from our association with SKDRDP will guide our expanded initiatives," he added.

NABARD plans to expand its partnership with SKDRDP to bridge rural-urban divide, expressing gratitude for SHGs' dedication and the supportive role of banks in the project.

Sitharaman distributed cheques to six SHGs. The SHGs that received cheques included: Ahad SHG from Khanapur, Dharwad (Rs 71,420); Roushan SHG from Hassan (Rs 69,367); Dhanya Shri SHG from Belthangady (Rs 90,108); Apoorva SHG from Anekal (Rs 50,820); Shri Nidhi SHG from Kundapura (Rs 1,30,000); and Shree Shankara SHG from Hosapete (Rs 61,840) in the presence of Dakshina Kannada MP Brijesh Chowta and MLA Harish Poonja. —*PTI*

Hindutva activist held for remarks against Zameer

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

A Hindutva activist has been arrested for allegedly threatening and making derogatory remarks against Minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, police sources said on Thursday.

In a Facebook post, Puneeth Kerehalli had criticised Khan for calling Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy 'Kaaliya' while campaigning for Congress candidate CP Yogeeshwara, contesting Channapatna Assembly bypoll. Reacting to it, Kerehalli made derogatory comments against Khan.

Based on a complaint by Khan's supporters, Chamarajpet police registered a case against Kerehalli and arrested him. —*PTI*

CRIME BEAT

City sees 2 suicides in 24 hours

BENGALURU 14 NOV

In two separate incidents, a 16-year-old girl and a 30-year-old accountant reportedly died by suicide in the city in the past 24 hours, police said on Thursday.

In the first incident, a 16-year-old pre-university student took her own life at her house in Shettihalli. Bagalagunte police have arrested a 28-year-old man, Swagath, for allegedly abetting the suicide and produced him before the court. He has been sent to Parappana Agrahara Central Prison.

Police said the accused and the 16-year-old victim were relatives and had developed a relationship recently. However, they soon broke up over some unknown reasons, following which the accused allegedly began harassing the girl.

On Wednesday evening, the girl's mother returned from her work and found her dead inside their house. In the second incident, a 30-year-old accountant was found hanging from a ceiling fan inside his room on Wednesday night. The deceased was identified as Karthikeyan, an employee at a private firm and a resident of Hosa Road. Karthikeyan was living with his parents in the house. Investigation suggested that he was under depression and was rarely speaking to his parents for a few days. His parents found him dead when they went to his room on Wednesday night. Parappana Agrahara police have registered a case. —*Salar News*

(If you need emotional support, please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.)

Cab driver held for attacking man

A 70-year-old man, Dalapathi, was attacked with a knife by a cab driver on Wednesday in Vinayaka Layout, following a heated argument over parking. The accused was arrested by the Annapoorneshwari Nagar police. The incident unfolded when the accused approached Dalapathi's home, demanding that they move their car. The man attacked Dalapathi after a verbal fight with his daughter-in-law.

Man arrested for assaulting woman cop

A man named Madhusudhan was arrested by Nelamangala police for assaulting a woman police sub-inspector (PSI).The incident occurred on Thursday when Sushilamma, a resident, filed a complaint against her son, Madhusudhan, for violent behavior. PSI Jayanthi, listened to the case and summoned Madhusudhan to the station. Madhusudhan, became enraged when the PSI advised him and attacked her.

Realtor, wife found dead in house

A 40-year-old realtor and his wife were found dead in an abandoned house on the outskirts of Koppa town in Mysuru, reports said on Thursday. Police identified the deceased as Suresh, a resident of Koppa and his wife Pallavi, 28. Police suspected that the duo took their own lives by hanging. Suresh, who was a real estate agent, had borrowed money from several people. —Salar News

MALDIVIAN FOUND DEAD IN RT NAGAR HOTEL

BENGALURU, 14 NOV

A 43-year-old Maldivian citizen was found dead under mysterious circumstances at a hotel in the RT Nagar locality of the state capital.

Police identified the deceased as Hasan Sohail, who came to the city on a business trip on 10 November. They said that he had booked a room in the hotel for two days.

Speaking to Salar News, an investigating officer said, "Hasan was to check out from the hotel on Tuesday. When he did not come out of his room until 1pm on Wednesday, the staff grew suspicious and went to check on him," he said.

Failing to get any response from Hasan, the staff alerted police, who broke open the door and found him lying dead. —*Salar News*

Security forces seize cache of arms in Manipur

IMPHAL, 14 NOV

The security forces on Wednesday have seized a substantial cache of arms and ammunition in Jiribam and Churachandpur districts of Manipur. During cordon and search operations conducted on Wednesday in the Champanagar, Narayanpur, and Thangboipunjre areas of Jiribam, authorities recovered one 2-inch mortar, thirty-six live barrel cartridges, and five empty barrel cartridges. Additionally, in H Kotlian village, Churachandpur district, forces uncovered one .303 rifle, one 9mm pistol, two short-range and two long-range locally manufactured cannons, as well as various rounds of ammunition, including five AK-47 live rounds and eighteen modified .303 rifle live rounds. *—PTI*

NIA seizes property of accused in Kashmir killings

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has attached the immovable property of Adil Manzoor Langoo, a key suspect in the murder of two non-local individuals in Kashmir earlier this year. Langoo is reportedly affiliated with 'The Resistance Front' (TRF), a splinter group of the Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). According to an official statement released on Thursday, the property seizure is part of a broader investigation into a conspiracy orchestrated by Langoo and two accomplices, Ahran Rasool Dar and Dawood, with guidance from a TRF/LeT handler based in Pakistan. This conspiracy aimed to incite terror and violence in India. Langoo was arrested on 12 February following the killings on 7 February, while a mastermind, identified as Jahangir, remains at large. *—PTI*

Revanth pitches for 21 as minimum age for Assembly polls

HYDERABAD, 14 NOV

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday advocated reducing the minimum age to contest legislative assembly elections from 25 to 21 "to promote greater youth representation" in state legislatures. Addressing the Children's Day celebrations at L B Stadium here, he urged Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Legislative Affairs Minister D Sridhar Babu to introduce a resolution in the next Assembly session seeking amendment of the Constitution, so that the minimum age for candidates could be lowered from 25 to 21. "We will pass it unanimously in the Assembly," he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

SC denies pre-arrest bail to Odisha BJP leader

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed an anticipatory bail plea of Odisha MLA and BJP leader Jayanarayan Mishra who is accused of slapping a female police officer during a protest outside Sambalpur Collectorate in 2022. A bench comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti rejected the plea of Mishra, who was represented by senior lawyer Maninder Singh, saying, "Those in leadership positions have to set an example for public behaviour." Mishra, in his reaction, said he was not aware of the development in the top court. The allegations against Mishra traced back to 2022 during a BJP-led protest which involved a sit-in demonstration.Mishra allegedly assaulted the female cop after she approached him to control the advancing crowd. *—PTI*

R'than candidate held after violence; scribe assaulted

About 60 people have been arrested following the violence

TONK, 14 NOV

Independent MLA candidate Naresh Meena was arrested on Thursday following high drama and escalating violence in which a mob assaulted a PTI reporter and video cameraperson and burnt their camera.

About 60 people were arrested in the early hours of Thursday following the violence that also saw crowds pelting stones at police personnel.

The attack, a day after the Congress rebel contesting as an Independent in the bypolls slapped SDM Malpura Amit Chaudhary outside a polling booth in front of hundreds of people, came while the PTI crew was covering a protest following the arrest.

PTI reporter Ajeet Shekhawat and cameraperson Dharmendra Kumar were badly injured and rushed to the Jeevan Surgical Hospital in Sawai Madhopur.

Independent candidate Naresh Meena slaps SDM Amit Chaudhary in Tonk district of Rajasthan, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

The two came under attack when they were about to interview Agriculture Minister Kirodi Lal

The chief minister's office (CMO) instructed senior police officers to provide security cover to the PTI team and also asked the chief medical and health officer (CMHO) of Sawai Madhopur to ensure the two men get proper treatment.

The violence has been going on since Wednesday evening when police tried to stop Naresh Meena's supporters from sitting on dharna.

The slap, videos of which were circulated widely on social media platforms, set in motion differing protests from both his supporters and Rajasthan Administrative Service officials. The tension that started outside the polling booth snowballing into outright violence through the night and into Thursday.

Work across government offices in the state was hit in the morning with officials of the RAS Association and allied services going on a pen-down strike demanding that Meena be arrested. They said they would continue till a meeting with Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma.

About 60 two-wheelers and 18 four-wheelers, including police vehicles, were torched in the violence that erupted outside the polling booth in Samravta village in the Deoli-Uniara assembly constituency when police tried to prevent the dharna. *—PTI*

AAP candidate Khichi elected as Delhi's new mayor

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Mahesh Khichi **PHOTO: X/@AAP**

Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Mahesh Khichi was elected as the next mayor of Delhi on Thursday, marking a significant victory for the ruling party in the national capital ahead of the Assembly polls due early next year.

As Khichi took his seat, the jubilant AAP councillors filled the air with the "Jai Bhim" slogan, celebrating the victory of the Dalit candidate in a tough contest.

Khichi defeated BJP's Kishan Lal by a wafer-thin margin of three votes, receiving 133 votes to the latter's 130. Two votes were declared invalid, with a total of 256 votes cast for the mayor's post.

Following its defeat in the mayoral poll contest, the BJP withdrew from the race for deputy mayor, clearing the way for the AAP's Ravinder Bharadwaj to secure the position unopposed. Eight AAP councillors cross-voted, helping the BJP increase its vote share in the election, party officials said. One vote from the BJP and one from the AAP were declared invalid, they added.

The seven Congress councillors did not participate in the voting and one councillor resigned from the party at the last moment.

The polls, initially scheduled for April, were postponed due to procedural delays.

—PTI

CAMPAIGN HEATS UP

'Cong plans separate Kashmir Constitution'

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 14 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the Congress and its allies are hatching a scheme to have a separate Constitution for Kashmir, and making all efforts for restoration of Article 370. "Will the people of Maharashtra support the Congress and its allies who speak the language of Pakistan," Modi said, addressing a rally in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. Modi said BJP-led Mahayuti government renamed Aurangabad as Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, and fulfilled the wish of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray.

"The whole Maharashtra knows that the demand to rename this city as Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar was raised by Balasaheb," he said. MVA was in power for two-and-a-half years but did not have the courage to rename the city under pressure from the Congress, he said.

Meanwhile, Congress lodged complaints with Election Commission against Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, accusing them of making "false, divisive, malicious and slanderous" statements during their recent election campaign. The Opposition party has urged EC to ban Modi and Shah from conducting any election-related activities. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated by Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde and others in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Now, EC officials check Kharge's bag in Nashik

NASHIK, 14 NOV

The bags of Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge were checked by the Election Commission as his helicopter landed in Nashik on Thursday.

Notably, Uddhav Thackeray's bag was checked again on Wednesday in Shrigonda, Ahmednagar. This is third time that that the Sena leader's bag has been checked by the poll body officials.

On Wednesday, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's bags were checked by poll personnel. *—Agencies*

'PM thinks I carry blank Constitution'

NANDURBAR, 14 NOV

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi feels the "red book" of the Constitution which Gandhi carries is blank as he has never read it.

Addressing a rally in Maharashtra's Nandurbar, Gandhi said the Constitution contains the soul of India and the principles envisaged by national icons like Birsa Munda, Dr B R Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi.

"The BJP has objections to the red colour of the book (which Gandhi has been displaying in rallies). But for us, irrespective of the colour, we are committed to preserve it (Constitution) and ready to give up our lives too. Modi ji feels the Constitution (book) is blank because he has never read it," he said. Congress wants adivasis, Dalits and backward classes to get representation in decision-making, the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

Gandhi alleged that Modi and BJP were insulting the national icons by making such comments. *—PTI*

LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi addresses a public meeting in Nandurbar district, Maharashtra on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Batenge to katenge slogan not in good taste: Chavan

NANDED, 14 NOV

BJP MP and former Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan has said the slogan "batenge to katenge" is not in good taste and irrelevant and the people will not appreciate it.

In an interview to PTI on Wednesday, Chavan also said he doesn't attach much importance to the "vote jihad - dharma yuddha" rhetoric, as the BJP and ruling Mahayuti's policy is development of the country and Maharashtra.

Notably, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Yogi Adityanath has been raising the slogan of "batenge to katenge" (divided we fall) in his rallies ahead of the 20 November Maharashtra Assembly polls. Chavan said, "There is no relevance of this (slogan). Slogans are given at election time. This particular slogan is not in good taste and I don't think people will appreciate it. Personally speaking, I am not in favour of such slogans." "Every political functionary has to take a decision after a lot of thinking. We also have to see that nobody's sentiments are hurt," the BJP leader added, while speaking at Ardhapur in Nanded during his election campaign for the Mahayuti.

BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis said "vote jihad" should be countered by "dharma-yuddha" of vote. *—PTI*

Winds damage makeshift structure raised for Kharge's rally

A temporary structure erected for a rally of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in Maharashtra's Nashik district was damaged on Thursday due to strong winds, police said. Two people suffered minor injuries in the incident that occurred in the afternoon in the Trimbak area, where the senior Congress leader was to address a public gathering. Just as the rally was about to start, strong winds lashed the area, damaging a temporary structure set up for the event. The curtains tied to the structure also got torn, he said. *—PTI*

AAP MLA gets bail in Waqf case

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan being greeted upon his release from jail in New Delhi, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

The Delhi High Court has granted bail to a co-accused in the money laundering case arising from alleged irregularities in the Waqf Board here during the chairmanship of AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan.

Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri granted relief to Jawed Imam Siddiqui in the case, noting that he was in custody since 11 November, 2023 and the trial was "stuck at the stage of supply of documents".

The ED on 29 October filed a 110-page first supplementary prosecution complaint (ED's equivalent of a chargesheet), claiming Khan laundered money that was allegedly generated through corruption in the Delhi Waqf Board.

The court said there was no evidence to proceed against Siddiqui and discharged her. "Bail to Amanat. Once again, Modi's false case has been exposed. Modi ji tried all his tricks but could not eliminate Arvind Kejriwal and AAP," the party's Rajya Sabha MP Singh said in Hindi on X.

Echoing his colleague, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said this was bound to happen. "All AAP leaders are out now. The truth cannot be defeated and we are going to contest the Delhi elections with full strength," he said. *—PTI*

Formula-E race row: KTR says he is ready to face probe

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao on Thursday claimed that the exodus from his party has stopped and identified the ruling Congress in Telangana as their main rival, even as he expressed readiness to face any probe into the Formula-E race controversy. "I am ready for any probe," Rao told PTI in an interview, responding to allegations of diverting Rs 55 crore to a Formula-E racing company without cabinet approval during his tenure as municipal minister.

He dismissed it as distraction games by Congress. *—PTI*

ED raids in Maharasthra, Gujarat in 'cash-for-votes' row

MUMBAI, 14 NOV

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday raided multiple locations in poll-bound Maharashtra and neighbouring Gujarat as part of a money laundering probe against a Malegaon-based trader, who allegedly misused bank accounts of various people to carry out transactions worth more than Rs 100 crore.

The federal agency is searching 23 premises in Malegaon, Nashik and Mumbai in Maharashtra and Ahmedabad and Surat in Gujarat under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The complainant in the case is a man whose bank account was allegedly misused for illegal transactions triggering speculation that the accounts were misused for routing election funds. It is alleged that the main accused took KYC details (PAN, Aadhaar etc.) of about a dozen people to open bank accounts in the Nashik Merchant Cooperative Bank as he told these persons that he wanted to start a corn business and hence needs to take money from farmers. The accused got opened two more accounts taking KYC documents from his friends. These 14 accounts were opened between September and October. *—PTI*

YSRCP insulted my mother, says Nara Lokesh

AMARAVATI, 14 NOV

MLA Nara Lokesh—son of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu Lokesh accused YSRCP of insulting his mother and then "running away" without taking responsibility. In an emotional speech, he slammed YSRCP leader YS Jaganmohan Reddy for allegedly defending those responsible by giving them tickets in recent assembly elections.

Lokesh said on X, , "My mother was insulted. Don't you remember that? We never spoke about Jagan's family. My father attended the assembly every day but walked out when my mother was insulted. Now I question YSRCP—why didn't your MLAs attend? By giving tickets to those who insulted my mother, didn't you defend them, Jagan?" Lokesh's remarks come amid the YSRCP's boycott of the budget session, leaving the party with only 11 seats in the Assembly. Lokesh also accused the YSRCP of targeting women in political families they oppose, including his own wife, the daughters of actor-politician Pawan Kalyan, and even Reddy's sister YS Sharmila, who leads the state Congress, and his mother, amid family tensions.

This incident has sparked a significant crackdown by the Naidu government on derogatory social media posts against women. *—Agencies*

OVER VIOLENT INCIDENTS

Govt bans Meghalaya-based insurgent grp

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

The government said the group is maintaining links with other insurgent groups of the northeastern region for carrying out extortion **PHOTO: PTI**

Meghalaya-based insurgent group Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) was on Thursday declared banned by the government for five years for its involvement in violent incidents and for carrying out activities prejudicial to India's sovereignty and integrity.

In a notification, the Union Home Ministry said the Central government is of the opinion that the HNLC has declared objective for secession of areas in the Meghalaya, largely inhabited by Khasi and Jaintia tribes, and continued intimidation and bullying of the civilian population to extort funds for their organisation.

It said the group is also maintaining links with other insurgent groups of the north-eastern region for carrying out extortion and intimidation and indulging in 48 criminal cases, including that of explosion or planting of explosives in Meghalaya, from November 2019 to June 2024. During this period, 73 cadres of the outfit were also arrested by the security forces. The Home Ministry said the activities of the HNLC are detrimental to the sovereignty and integrity of India.

If these are not immediately curbed and controlled, the HNLC may regroup and rearm itself, expand its cadres, , cause loss of lives of civilians and security forces and thereby accelerate its anti-national activities, the ministry said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Odisha to pay paddy ryots ₹800 more per quintal

BHUBANESWAR, 14 NOV

Holding the previous BJD government "responsible" for the "miseries" of farmers in Odisha, Chief Minister on Thursday said his government will pay an additional Rs 800 per quintal of paddy to cultivators. Farmers will get the additional Rs 800 as input assistance as they are often affected by different calamities like floods, cyclones, drought, dry spells and pest attacks, Majhi said at the All India Cooperative Week 2024 celebration. Majhi alleged that some of the state farmers were led to suicide by debt during the BJD government. However, this situation will not occur in Odisha under BJP government, he said, adding that now the farmers will get Rs 3,100 per quintal of paddy. *—PTI*

Casteist slurs, funeral disruption: 4 booked in UP

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 14 NOV

A village head and three others have been arrested by the Khatauli Police for allegedly obstructing the funeral of a Dalit and making casteist remarks in Bhainsi village.Baburam, a Dalit, died on 9 November, according to the complaint filed by a woman named Sonia."As per the complaint when the body was being carried to the village crematorium, a group led by village head Amit Ahlavat obstructed the last rites, making derogatory remarks against the Dalit community," said Circle Officer Ramashish Yadav. Police assisted in a cremation on 9 November, registering a case against the accused under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) for allegations of caste-based discrimination and atrocities, which are being further investigated. *—PTI*

Woman cop found hanging in barrack in Bihar

SAMASTIPUR, 14 NOV

A woman police constable was found hanging in the bathroom of her barrack in Bihar's Samastipur district, an official said on Thursday. The deceased has been identified as Chandani Kumari, a resident of Vaishali district. Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), Samastipur (Sadar), Sanjay Kumar Pandey told reporters, "Chandani Kumari was staying in the barrack on the second floor of Musrigharari police station. Another female constable found the bathroom door locked from inside. When the door was opened with the help of other constables, Chandani was found hanging inside the bathroom on Wednesday evening."She was immediately taken to hospital, where she was declared dead. Her mobile phone and a diary recovered from her barrack have been seized and are being analysed. *—PTI*

Sabarimala: Devotional hub to come up at Erumeli

KOTTAYAM, 14 NOV

Kerala Revenue Minister K Rajan announced plans to develop a devotional hub and convention centre in Erumeli after the end of the Sabarimala pilgrimage season.According to the minister, an additional Rs 20 lakh from the flood relief fund will be allocated to improve the road on both sides of the parking area. Also the press release from the state government stated that the Housing Board plans to develop an international-standard devotional hub at its site in Erumeli.The project, set to be completed in three phases, will include affordable parking, eateries, a refreshment centre, a cafeteria, and guest houses, all located on a six-and-a-half-acre site. *—PTI*

TN doctors protest against attack on oncologist

Docs demand safety measures; govt says ops not hit

CHENNAI, 14 NOV

Doctors across Tamil Nadu staged a protest on Thursday condemning the violent assault of Dr Balaji Jegannathan, a government oncologist, who was attacked by a patient's son at the Kalaignar Centenary Super Specialty Hospital (KCSSH) in Guindy. The protest, led by the Indian Medical Association and the Tamil Nadu Government Doctors Association, aimed to raise awareness about the safety of medical professionals while assuring that patient care remained unaffected.

Dr Balaji, who sustained multiple stab wounds during the attack on Wednesday, is currently recovering well in the hospital. State Health Minister Ma Subramanian visited him earlier and reported that his vital signs are stable. "Dr Balaji expressed his desire to continue serving patients despite the traumatic incident," Dr L Parthasarathy, director of KCSSH, stated.

The attack reportedly stemmed from frustration over the patient's advanced Hodgkin's Lymphoma diagnosis. Following the incident, the police have registered multiple charges against the assailant, identified as Vignesh, including attempted murder. On whether the strike affected the medical services to the patients, Dr Parthasarathy said that there were sufficient numbers of doctors to attend to about 500 to 600 inpatients and those in ICU at KCSSH. In response to increasing concerns about safety in medical settings, the Health Minister announced the introduction of a new identification system for patients' attendants at government hospitals. This includes a color-coded tag system designed to enhance security and promote a safer environment.

Minister Subramanian emphasised that a police outpost would be established in hospitals lacking security measures, following the recent attack. He expressed hope that the matter would be resolved amicably and noted that the well-being of medical staff and patients is of utmost importance. *—PTI*

Doctors during a strike against the stabbing of an oncologist, in Madurai on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

SC bins drug side effects disclosure plea

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a plea seeking to mandate that medical professionals inform patients of all possible risks and side effects associated with prescribed medications. The court stated that such obligations would be impractical for general practitioners, as it could limit their ability to serve multiple patients. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing the petitioner, argued that patients should be able to make informed choices regarding their treatments.

ARRESTED IN CANADA

Arsh Dalla was arrested by Canadian Police late last month PHOTO: PTI

India steps up extradition bid of Khalistani Dalla

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

India on Thursday said it will pursue an extradition request with Canada for Arsh Singh Gill alias Arsh Dalla, the de-facto chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force, following his arrest in that country.

Dalla was designated in India as a terrorist in 2023.

In July 2023, India had requested the Canadian government for his provisional arrest.

Dalla was reportedly arrested by the Canadian Police late last month.

"We have seen media reports circulating since 10 November on the arrest in Canada of proclaimed offender Arsh Singh Gill alias Arsh Dalla, the de-facto chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force," External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said said.

"Canadian print and visual media have widely reported on the arrest. We understand that the Ontario Court has listed the case for hearing," he added.

Jaiswal was replying to media queries regarding the arrest of Dalla.

"Arsh Dalla is a proclaimed offender in over 50 cases of murder, attempt to murder, extortion and terrorist acts, including terror financing. In May 2022, a Red Corner Notice was issued against him," Jaiswal said.

"He was designated in India as an individual terrorist in 2023. In July 2023, the Government of India had requested the Canadian government for his provisional arrest. This was declined," he added.

Jaiswal said India had provided additional information in the case to the Canadian authorities.

"A separate request was also sent to Canada under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) to verify Arsh Dalla's suspected residential address, his financial transactions to India, moveable/immovable properties, details of mobile numbers etc - all of which were provided to Canadian authorities in January 2023," Jaiswal said.

"In December 2023, the Department of Justice of Canada sought additional information on the case. A reply to these queries was sent in March this year," he added.. *—PTI*

'Telling grounds of arrest not must in hit-&-run cases'

MUMBAI, 14 NOV

The Bombay High Court on Thursday remarked that informing an accused the grounds of arrest would be an "empty formality" in cases such as a hit-and-run accident, and its non-compliance should not matter so much.

The court made the observation while reserving its order on petitions for release filed by Mihir Shah, son of a former Shiv Sena leader who is accused of ramming his BMW car into a woman, leading to her death, and his driver. The petitions by Shah, 24, and his driver Rajrishi Bidawat claimed that police failed to comply with section 50 of the Code of Criminal Procedure when they were arrested. The division bench it wondered if an accused can claim that the arrest was vitiated for this sole reason in cases such as a hit-and-run accident or a murder. "The accident has taken place...the persons have been apprehended red-handed, then why should the issue of grounds of arrest crop up? This is a case where it clearly leads to the accused. The lady was rammed into... the car was there," the Court said. *—PTI*

Miscreants held as UPPSC students' protest enters day 4

PRAYAGRAJ, 14 NOV

On Thursday, the fourth day of students' agitation against the decision of the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) to conduct the RO-ARO and PCS preliminary examinations over two days, police detained alleged miscreants who infiltrated into the protest.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (City) Abhishek Bharti said, "A peaceful agitation of the students was going on in front of the Public Service Commission here. Meanwhile, some miscreants with criminal tendencies penetrated into the group of 50–60 students and tried to stop them from communicating with the administration."

He said these "miscreants" were also trying to provoke the agitating students. The police have detained them, he said. "No other student preparing for the exam has been detained. Women police force is present here and peaceful talks are being held with everyone," Bharti said.

"We are taking legal action as per rules against miscreants who are infiltrating among the students and misleading them. Also, the students who are protesting by blocking the road in front of the commission are being requested to go to the designated protest site and protest peacefully," he said.

The agitating students again started protesting from Thursday morning and raised slogans against Commission chairman Sanjay Srinet. On Wednesday evening, these students had protested by taking out a candle march.

The UPPSC has scheduled the Provincial Civil Service Preliminary Examination for 7 and 8 December. The Review Officer and Assistant Review Officer Preliminary Examinations are set for 22 and 23 December.

The students said they would not buckle down until their demand is met. "Whether it lasts for a week or many weeks, we will continue the protest," said Gyanendra Kumar, a student. *—PTI*

Security tries to stop civil services aspirants from jumping over barricades during a protest against UPPSC PHOTO: PTI

SC to hear urgent plea on Delhi's pollution on 18 Nov

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

In a bid to address the escalating air quality crisis in Delhi, the Supreme Court has scheduled an urgent hearing on November 18 regarding measures to combat pollution in the national capital New Delhi. The decision follows a plea urging enforcement of stricter pollution controls as the city grapples with alarming air quality levels. Senior advocate Aprajita Singh, appointed as amicus curiae, raised concerns about Delhi's deteriorating air quality. On 11 November, the top court said the right to live in a pollution-free atmosphere was a fundamental right of every citizen, protected by Article 21 of the Constitution. *—PTI*

1ST 3 BENCHES FOR PILS

CJI Khanna revamps case allocation roster

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna has come out with a fresh roster for allocation of new cases to 16 benches and it has been decided that the first three courts presided over by the CJI and the two senior-most judges, respectively, will hear letter petitions and PILs.

The roster for the assignment of fresh cases was notified by the apex court registry under the order of the CJI and has come into effect from 11 November.

The fresh petitions arising out of letters written by the citizens to the apex court and the new public interest litigations (PILs) will be heard by the benches presided over by the CJI, Justice BR Gavai and Justice Surya Kant, the two senior-most judges, respectively.

Besides the letter petitions and the PILs, subject wise, the CJI-led bench will be dealing with a maximum number of issues, including those related to social justice, disputes related to election of president, vice president, MPs and MLAS, habeas corpus matters and arbitration. *—PTI*

Sanjiv Khanna PHOTO: X

SC bins PIL against inflammatory speeches

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) from the 'Hindu Sena Samiti' seeking intervention against inflammatory speeches by public figures, arguing that these statements threaten national unity and security. Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar noted a distinction between hate speech and incorrect assertions, stating they were not inclined to entertain the petition. The PIL had called for guidelines to curb provocative rhetoric and penalize individuals whose statements could disrupt public order.

Advocates for the petitioner highlighted recent comments from political leaders. *—PTI*

Money laundering case: ED raids largest EB donor Lottery King

CHENNAI, 14 NOV

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) launched extensive searches on Thursday across multiple states targeting Santiago Martin, the Chennai-based lottery mogul often referred to as the 'lottery king.' The action is part of a larger money laundering investigation, with official sources highlighting that Martin is the largest donor to political parties, contributing over Rs 1,300 crore through electoral bonds.

This operation follows the Madras High Court's recent decision permitting the ED to pursue its case against Martin after the Tamil Nadu Police opted to close a primary FIR involving him. At least 20 locations associated with Martin, his son-in-law Aadhav Arjun, and business associates were simultaneously searched in Chennai and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, Faridabad in Haryana, Ludhiana in Punjab, and Kolkata in West Bengal. ED has identified several police FIRs related to alleged lottery fraud and illicit lottery sales, prompting this comprehensive crackdown on Martin's business empire. A notable aspect of the ED's inquiry surrounds Martin's company, Future Gaming Solutions India Pvt. Ltd., identified as the principal distributor of Sikkim lotteries. Additionally, the Madras High Court dismissed a closure report from the Chennai Police regarding the seizure of Rs 7.2 crore in unaccounted cash from Martin's residence, paving the way for the current ED actions. *—PTI*

Santiago Martin PHOTO: X

- ED has identified several police FIRs related to alleged lottery fraud and illicit lottery sales, prompting this comprehensive crackdown on Martin's business empire

82.2 CR GLOBALLY

India had 25% of world's diabetics in 2022: Lancet study

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

About 82.8 crore people around the world were estimated to be living with diabetes in 2022, with over a quarter in India, according to an analysis published in The Lancet journal ahead of World Diabetes Day observed every year on 14 November.

The figure of 82.8 crore is over four times the number in 1990, with the largest increase in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), researchers forming the Non-Communicable Disease Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC) said.

Between 1990 and 2022, rates of diabetes treatment stagnated at low levels in many of the same LMICs, where cases of the disease drastically increased, resulting in 44.5 crore adults aged 30 and over with the metabolic condition globally (nearly 60 per cent) who did not receive treatment in 2022, the researchers said.

Of the 82.8 crore, India's share formed over a quarter (21.2 crore). Another 14.8 crore were in China, while 4.2 crore, 3.6 crore and 2.2 crore lived in the US, Pakistan and Brazil, respectively, the researchers found. NCD-RisC is a global network, coordinated by the World Health Organization, of over 1,500 researchers and practitioners providing information on risk factors for non-communicable disease across countries. In 2022, almost one third of the 44.5 crore adults (13.3 crore) with untreated diabetes lived in India. "Our findings suggest there is an increasing share of people with diabetes, especially with untreated diabetes, living in low- and middle-income countries," said author Jean Claude Mbanya, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon.

"Most people with untreated diabetes will not have received a diagnosis, therefore increasing detection of diabetes must be an urgent priority in countries with low levels of treatment," he said.

Undiagnosed diabetes has been linked with complications such as diabetic retinopathy – when high levels of blood sugar damage the eye's retina – which can potentially cause vision loss and blindness. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

WORLD'S LARGEST CORAL

Divers swim over the world's largest coral in the Pacific Ocean near the Solomon Islands, in the Pacific Ocean, a gigantic organism that can be seen from space. The mega coral is 32 metres long and 34 metres wide and is believed to be about 300 years old
PHOTO: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

UP bulldozer victims hail SC verdict, seek compensation

A day after the Supreme Court verdict on bulldozer action, the victims of demolition drives across Uttar Pradesh have breathed a sigh of relief and said they would take legal recourse to seek compensation for their losses.

The Uttar Pradesh government, which has been receiving flak from various quarters over its bulldozer action, has also hailed the apex court's verdict while clarifying that the demolitions were carried out after following due process and on properties constructed on encroached lands.

Equating "bulldozer justice" with a lawless state of affairs where might is right, the Supreme Court on Wednesday laid down pan-India guidelines and said no property should be demolished without a prior showcause notice and the affected must be given 15 days to respond.

In Prayagraj, the house of Javed Mohammad, who runs a pump set business, was demolished with a bulldozer on 12 June, 2022. Police justified the action, saying he had five cases registered against him and was the main accused in a stone pelting incident in the Atala area.

"Houses shouldn't be demolished in an arbitrary manner... when my two-storey house was being demolished, my wife and daughter were kept in police custody," Mohammad said, hailing the SC verdict.

He claimed his house was razed without notice as the local administration was eager to prove to the higher-ups that it had ensured "action overnight".

"The administration's claim of sending a notice is completely false... they never sent any notice," he said.

He said after the demolition, his family faced a lot of hardships and no one came forward to help.

"No friend or relative came forward to help. With great difficulty my family shifted to a rented house," he said, adding that due to the demolition, he suffered huge losses in his business.

Supreme Court on Wednesday laid down pan-India guidelines and said no property should be demolished without a prior showcause notice and the affected must be given 15 days to respond ***PHOTO: PTI***

- The Uttar Pradesh government clarified that the demolitions were carried out after following due process and on properties constructed on encroached lands

Prayagraj Development Authority Secretary Ajit Singh, however, said the authority only takes action against those houses or shops that are not approved.

"Before a demolition, a notice is issued and the person is given an opportunity to present his side. Action is taken only after that," he said.

In Bareilly, houses of 16 people were demolished in Gausganj village in Shahi area on 22 July . The houses belonged to those named as accused in a clash over taking out a Tazia procession in which one person was killed.

Reacting to the SC verdict Rasidan, Nafisa and Saira Khatoon of Gausganj, whose houses had been demolished, said they will approach the court to seek compensation.

Sub Divisional Magistrate Tripti Gupta said 11 houses of those involved in vandalism were identified in the village. These houses were constructed after encroaching on the Gram Sabha land. Later, a revenue team identified five more such houses that too were demolished, she said.

On 22 June, two groups of Rajiv Rana and Aditya Upadhyay fired at each other in Bareilly over a dispute. On 27 June, Rana's house and hotel in the Tulasherpur locality were demolished while the resort of Upadhyay also saw bulldozer action on 28 July.

Rana's daughter Avantika said after the SC decision, they have decided to take the police, district administration and the Bareilly Development Authority to court to seek compensation.

While BDA Vice Chairman Manikandon A said that Upadhyay's resort was constructed illegally, the businessman's mother, Savitri Devi, said no notice was served to them regarding the demolition.

"We were not given time to take out our belongings," said Devi. Five more houses were demolished in Kalyanpur village in the Sirauli area after a blast in a cracker factory killed eight people on 6 October. Sub Divisional Magistrate of Aonla, Nanhe Ram, said the houses were damaged due to the explosion and had to be demolished to prevent their collapse and more loss of lives. *—PTI*

SALAR سالار

Why online scams are on the rise in India

Shatabdi Biswas woke up to a call on a smog-filled December morning in Delhi in 2022. Within the next two hours, despite being no stranger to the internet, she lost nearly all the money her bank accounts held.

The 37-year-old content writer was a victim of a "digital arrest" scam that has caught national attention in recent months. The crime involves a scam artist posing as a law enforcement official, often a police or customs officer, who informs an unsuspecting victim that their identity has been used in illegal activities.

Over the next few hours, the victim is manipulated and kept on a fake "arrest" call until they end up handing over their savings.

Biswas is one among millions to fall for this kind of scam in India.

"What bothered me most was that I had sent them the money myself," she said, sitting in a cafe as she revisited the traumatic morning nearly two years ago.

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), a central agency that operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs, reported an average of 7,000 daily cybercrime complaints in just the first four months of 2024.

This includes not just digital arrest scams but also several other types of online frauds, such as job, investment or romance scams and online phishing. Victims are estimated to have lost about 17.5 billion rupees as a result. "What's worrying is that the high rate of complaints is not the full picture. Many don't report it because they aren't aware of procedures, or they're ashamed of getting fooled," said Arun Kumar Verma, an official in the cybercrime department of Delhi police.

Stories like Biswas's have become common. Digital financial frauds saw a five-fold jump between March of 2023 and 2024, with money robbed amounting to about 14.57 billion rupees according to data provided by India's central bank.

While there is little to no data to clarify why scams have exponentially increased in India, Ridhi Kashyap, a researcher part of the team that created the index, took an educated guess. Kashyap believes digital literacy is lagging behind the digitalization wave sweeping India.

Government policies and the Covid-19 pandemic have catapulted Indian masses towards a quick digitalization of payments and key public infrastructure.

Women are especially vulnerable to scams, Kashyap said, adding that India has a large digital gender gap. "Women are much less likely to own a mobile phone. When they do own them, they are less likely to have exclusive ownership, and they often rely on family members to help them navigate. This means lower levels of confidence and higher vulnerability," she said.

Another key factor in the Indian context is the large number of young people who are skilled in technical education but lack meaningful employment. "We see this in Russia and Ukraine as well," she added.

Youtuber Jim Browning, who has been hacking into the computers and surveillance systems of professional scam centers mainly in India, said he often asks perpetrators why they scam people. "The majority say they have no choice. I have seen some of their CVs on their computers. These are well-educated graduates in many cases," Browning, who doesn't use his real name, said. Another glaring reason, according to Browning, is the low rate of law enforcement. A lack of resources — both personnel and otherwise — poses a serious problem. "We take cases according to the location of the victim's residence. But criminals can sit with phones and laptops anywhere in India, which means traveling for days. We don't have the time for that," senior police officer , New Delhi Arun Kumar Verma said. The officer also warned of a new wave of investment scams targeting Indians from within the country and abroad.

"Cybercrime is not like a regular burglary. There is no perpetrator present at the crime scene. Just a phone number and an account number which could belong to anyone," he said, explaining how many scammers use proxy bank accounts.

"Our real problem begins when the money trail leaves the country," Verma said, explaining that this makes recovery far more difficult.

"If you look at the victims of investment scams, it's mostly young, educated people who want to get rich instantly," he said. "Their greed makes them easy targets."

A more careful Shatabdi Biswas still gets scam calls regularly. "Sometimes I pick up the call and yell at them. Take out my frustration," she said.

She now ensures her bank accounts hold only the minimum cash she requires and invests the rest out of reach of scammers. "It's been a lesson." *—DW India*

An average of 7,000 cybercrime complaints were reported in the first four months of 2024 ***PHOTO: AI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Trump's picks for top foreign policy posts reassure allies & worry China

President-elect Donald Trump is famously unconventional, but he made conventional picks for his two top foreign policy positions. That could be reassuring to American allies, while China and Iran have reasons to be wary.

Trump on Wednesday announced his choice of Sen. Marco Rubio for secretary of state. Two days earlier, he picked Rep. Mike Waltz for national security adviser.

Both men share Trump's hard-line stance on China and Iran. They have shown themselves willing to adapt their foreign-policy positions to echo aspects of Trump's more isolationist "America First" approach — a requirement for anyone serving under a president who demands absolute loyalty. But both are fairly mainstream conservatives with foreign policy experience who have previously differed with Trump on Russia, NATO and other issues.

They've also been open to working with Democrats — a point underscored when Sen. Mark Warner, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said Rubio would be a "strong voice for American interests" abroad.

Trump named Pete Hegseth, a Fox News host untested on the global stage, as defence secretary. He picked a congresswoman with little foreign policy experience, Rep. Elise Stefanik, as ambassador to the United Nations. His choice for ambassador to Israel, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, rejects the two-state solution to the conflict with Palestinians.

And US allies may be relieved that Rubio was selected over Richard Grenell for secretary of state. Grenell is a former diplomat and intelligence official, with a reputation for favouring autocratic strongmen abroad.

Rubio, a 14-year veteran of the Senate, is a senior member of the Senate Intelligence Committee and Foreign Relations Committee. His roots as the son of Cuban immigrants who worked as a bartender and a hotel maid after coming to the United States helped shape his tough positions on the leftist governments of Cuba and Venezuela.

While Trump has alarmed US allies in Europe with his criticism of the NATO military alliance and praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose war on Ukraine has galvanized European fears of Russian expansionism, Rubio was instrumental in the Senate in securing the US position in NATO. He and Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine spearheaded legislation to bar any president from pulling the US out of NATO without Senate approval or an act of Congress.

Secretary of state pick Sen. Marco Rubio and National security adviser pick Rep. Mike Waltz share US president-elect Donald Trump's hard-line stance on China and Iran ***PHOTOS: WIKIPEDIA***

But Rubio, like Waltz, has altered his public statements and legislative votes to more closely align with Trump's criticism of the Biden administration's backing of Ukraine as it battles invading Russian forces. After early votes and supportive statements for Ukraine after Russia's 2022 attack, Rubio and Waltz more recently voted against additional military aid to Ukraine. Rubio, like Trump, has increasingly stressed the need to end the war. That's in contrast to Ukraine supporters in both parties who say the US must support Ukraine's fight so it gets the best possible terms in any eventual ceasefire. "I don't think he (Trump) puts people in positions that are going to disagree with him. He wants people to be loyal, and I don't think he's looking for people that are going to challenge his beliefs," said Kelly Grieco, a senior fellow at the Stimson Center, a Washington-based research institute. "So I think this is actually quite revealing, probably, of what the direction of US policy will be, that it will be really hawkish on China in particular. And I think also on Iran."

In China, analysts consider Rubio and Waltz to be "ultra-hawkish" toward Beijing and have taken to calling them part of the "Florida faction" in foreign policy, since both are from the state. Trump piled tariffs on China in his first term and promises more tariffs in his next one.

Rubio is known in China as the "anti-China vanguard" for his ideologically driven, anti-communism stance. He landed on Beijing's blacklist in 2020 over his support for the minority Uyghurs in China's far western region of Xinjiang and for Hong Kong activists. He co-chaired the bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which focuses on human rights, and introduced and supported numerous bills on China's rights issues. The sanctions Beijing imposed on Rubio bar him from visiting the country. It's unclear if China's foreign minister will meet with him given the ban, or how the ban will otherwise affect his dealings with Chinese officials.

For his part, Waltz is a former Green Beret with combat tours in Afghanistan and the Middle East, a former defence policy director in the Pentagon, and a senior member of the House committees for armed services, intelligence and oversight.

He's supported Western backing for Ukraine, saying doing nothing would invite further Russian aggression in Europe and draw in US troops. But Waltz increasingly emphasises the importance of Ukraine's neighbours stepping up, saying Europeans should be spending as much on Ukraine's defence as the United States does. In 2021, Waltz introduced a resolution calling on the US Olympic Committee to withdraw from the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing. At a daily briefing in Beijing, Lin Jian, a spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry, said China would not comment on Trump's appointments.

Shen Dingli, a Shanghai-based international relations expert, noted the gap between Trump and his nominees on China. "Trump didn't say China was an enemy during his first term and the presidential elections, but the hawkish officials he has appointed may believe China is an enemy to some extent," Shen said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Philippines braces for fifth typhoon in 3 weeks

MANILA, 14 NOV

The fifth major storm in three weeks approached the Philippines on Thursday, prompting more largescale evacuations and a United Nations request for emergency funds to help the government ease the plight of hard-hit villagers. Typhoon Usagi had sustained winds of up to 185kph and gusts of up to 230kph and was forecast to strengthen further before slamming on Thursday afternoon into the coast of Cagayan province at the northern tip of Luzon. Another storm was brewing in the Pacific and may hit the northern Philippines this weekend. Typhoon Toraji blew away from the northern Philippines two days ago after unleashing floods, knocking down power lines and forcing more than 42,000 people to evacuate their homes. *—PTI*

Ex-S Korean lawmaker guilty of misusing funds

SEOUL, 14 NOV

South Korea's Supreme Court on Thursday handed a suspended prison sentence to a former lawmaker who was found guilty of embezzling funds while leading a group supporting Korean survivors of Japan's wartime sexual slavery. Yoon Meehyang, who was also convicted of fraudulently receiving government subsidies and unlawfully collecting donations, didn't attend the verdict. Controversy surrounding Yoon and her group, the Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, erupted in 2020 when one of the slavery victims, Lee Yong-soo, accused her of misusing donations. Yoon denied allegations and insisted that Lee's claim was based on a misunderstanding. *—PTI*

2 children killed in Pakistan explosion

PESHAWAR, 14 NOV

A powerful explosion ripped through a house in a former stronghold of the Pakistani Taliban on Thursday, killing at least two children and wounding some others, police said. Police were still investigating what caused the blast including whether someone was handling explosives to make bomb, local police chief Irfan Khan said. The blast happened in Mir Ali, a city in the northwest province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which borders Afghanistan and where Pakistani Taliban and other insurgents often target security forces. Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, are separate from Afghan Taliban but have been emboldened by the group's takeover of Afghanistan in 2021. *—PTI*

Man kills self in blast outside Brazil's SC

SAO PAULO, 14 NOV

A man who failed in an attempt to break into Brazil's Supreme Court killed himself in explosions outside the building that forced justices and staff to evacuate, authorities said. The two strong blasts were heard about 7.30pm after the day's session finished and all the justices and staff left the building safely, Brazil's Supreme Court said in a statement. Local firefighters confirmed one man died at the scene in the capital Brasilia, but did not identify him. Celina Leao, the lieutenant governor of Brazil's federal district, said the suspect had earlier detonated explosives in a car in a Congress parking lot, which did not cause injuries. Local media reported that the car that exploded belonged to a member of Brazil's Liberal Party, the same of former president Jair Bolsonaro. *—PTI*

Republicans win control of US House

Victories in Arizona and California helped the Republican party secure a majority

US president-elect Donald Trump with US President Joe Biden in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, US *PHOTO: X/@ POTUS*

WASHINGTON DC, 14 NOV

Republicans have won enough seats to control the US House, completing the party's sweep into power and securing their hold on US government alongside president-elect Donald Trump. A House Republican victory in Arizona, alongside a win in slow-counting California earlier Wednesday, gave the party the 218 House victories that make up the majority. Republicans earlier gained control of the Senate from Democrats.

The incoming president has promised to carry out the country's largest-ever deportation operation, extend tax breaks, punish his political enemies, seize control of the federal government's most powerful tools and reshape the US economy. The GOP election victories ensure that Congress will be onboard for that agenda, and Democrats will be almost powerless to check it.

When he returns to the White House, Trump will be working with a Republican Party that has been completely transformed by his "Make America Great Again" movement and a Supreme Court dominated by conservative justices, including three that he appointed.

"I suspect I won't be running again unless you say, He's good, we got to figure something else,'" Trump said to the room full of lawmakers who laughed in response.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, who with Trump's endorsement won the Republican Conference's nomination to stay on as speaker next year, has talked of taking a "blowtorch" to the federal government and its programmes, eyeing ways to overhaul even popular programs championed by Democrats in recent years.

Trump's allies in the House are already signalling they will seek retribution for the legal troubles Trump faced while out of office. *—PTI*

Tulsi Gabbard is new director of National Intel

WASHINGTON DC, 14 NOV

US President-elect Donald Trump on Thursday announced that Tulsi Gabbard, a former Democrat and the first-ever Hindu elected to the US Congress, would serve as Director of National Intelligence in his second term. A four-term Congresswoman, 2020 presidential candidate and NYT bestselling author, Gabbard is a veteran with three deployments to war zones in the Middle East and Africa. She recently moved from being a Democrat to a Republican member. Gabbard first served in elected office in the Hawaii State House of Representatives when she was 21 years old. After the 9/11 attacks, she enlisted in the Army National Guard. In August Gabbard formally endorsed Trump for a second term and soon after began serving as co-chair of his transition team. *—PTI*

Tulsi Gabbard *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

DEEPAVALI IN CAPITOL

Congressmen Shri Thanedar, Ben Cline, Robert Aderholt and Steny Hoyer celebrate Deepavali by lighting the lamp at the Capitol, the first major event at the US Congress after last week's presidential elections. More than two dozen lawmakers and eminent Indian Americans participated in the event *PHOTO: X/ @BAPS_PUBAFFAIRS*

Birth control, abortion pill demands surge

Requests for long-term birth control and permanent sterilisations have surged across the US since the election. Trump said that he was open to supporting regulations on contraception. But later he clarified saying he "has never and will never" advocate for restricting birth control.

1M migrants rely on temporary protections

Millions of migrants live in the US when the Biden administration offered Temporary Protected Status (TPS), allowing people already in the US to stay and work. But to their disamy Trump during one of the election rallies suggested scaling back the use of TPS that covers more than 1 million immigrants.

Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayake (centre) leaves after casting his vote in Colombo, Sri Lanka *PHOTO: PTI*

SL votes in snap polls called by Prez

COLOMBO, 14 NOV

Voting for the 2024 Parliamentary Election commenced at 7am on Thursday in Sri Lanka in snap elections called by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who won the polls this September, local media reported.

Dissanayake, aims to secure a majority in parliament to put forward his policies to revive the island nation from its financial crisis.

The independent body, Election Commission of Sri Lanka (ECSL) is overseeing the 10th general polls and the inaugural session of the newly elected Parliament is scheduled for 21 November, Daily News reported.

A total of 8,361 candidates, with 5,015 from 408 recognised political parties and 3,346 from 282 independent groups are vying for selection as representatives of the new Parliament.

All members are elected for a five-year term.

But 29 out of 225 seats are decided indirectly through a national list.

The 29 candidates from the national list will be selected out of 516 candidates from 27 recognized political parties and 11 candidates from two independent groups.

Addressing a campaign rally of the NPP on 11 November, President Dissanayake said that Sri Lanka will be transformed into a country free of poverty by his government.

He said that he and his government "will make every effort to turn around the country from its current state into a developed nation by transforming the victory given by the citizens."

He further said that once the NPP government is formed after the Parliamentary Election, a Cabinet will be set up with less than 25 ministers and a smaller group to assist them in order to begin the work to build and develop the country, the Daily News reported. *—ANI*

Biden, Xi to meet on 16 Nov to discuss bilateral ties

WASHINGTON DC, 14 NOV

Outgoing US President Joe Biden will meet his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Peru on Saturday on the sidelines of an international summit, during which the two leaders expect to review the bilateral relations, the White House said Wednesday.

The two leaders are scheduled to meet on 16 November at Lima, the capital of Peru, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit. The meeting would come just over two months before Donald Trump's return to the White House. This will be their third in-person meeting since Biden entered office. They previously met in Bali, in 2022, on the margins of the G20, and at Woodside, California in 2023, on the margins of APEC. *—PTI*

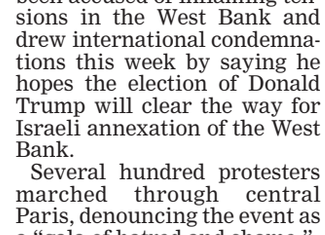
Chinese hacking probe reveals spying effort: FBI

WASHINGTON DC, 14 NOV

A federal investigation into Chinese government efforts to hack into US telecommunications networks has revealed a "broad and significant" cyber-espionage campaign aimed at stealing information from Americans who work in government and politics, the FBI said.

Hackers affiliated with Beijing have compromised the networks of "multiple" telecommunications companies to obtain customer call records and gain access to the private communications of "a limited number of individuals," according to a joint statement issued by the FBI and the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. The hackers also sought to copy "certain information that was subject to US law enforcement requests pursuant to court orders," the FBI said, suggesting the hackers may have been trying to compromise programmes like those subject to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, which grants American spy agencies sweeping powers to surveil the communications of individuals suspected of being agents of a foreign power." Last month, officials said hackers linked to China targeted the phones of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump and his running mate, Sen. JD Vance. China has rejected accusations that it engages in cyberespionage.

A message left with China's embassy in Washington was not immediately returned on Thursday. *—PTI*



Protests erupt in Paris over pro-Israel gala

PARIS, 14 NOV

Protests erupted in Paris on Thursday against a controversial gala organised by Far-Right figures in support of Israel. The event, intended to raise funds for the Israeli military, included Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich among its invited guests.

The demonstrations came on the eve of a high-stakes soccer match at France's national stadium against the Israeli national team. Smotrich, a vocal advocate of Israeli settlements, had been expected to attend Thursday's gala, dubbed "Israel is Forever," which was planned by an association of the same name. The group's stated goal is to "mobilise French-speaking Zionist forces." Smotrich has been accused of inflaming tensions in the West Bank and drew international condemnations this week by saying he hopes the election of Donald Trump will clear the way for Israeli annexation of the West Bank.

Several hundred protesters marched through central Paris, denouncing the event as a "gala of hatred and shame."

A separate group, including Jewish leftist organizations opposed to racism and antisemitism, gathered near the Arc de Triomphe chanting slogans against the gala and Smotrich. *—PTI*

Russian official visits China's military expo

ZHUHAI, 14 NOV

A top Russian defence official has attended China's premier military showcase in a show of unity between the countries as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine.

Sergei Shoigu, secretary of the Russian Federation Security Council, was in the southern city of Zhuhai to view Chinese and Russian aircraft and other military hardware on Thursday. They included Chinese J22 and J35A stealth fighters that China says are rivals to the latest US jets in the same class.

Shoigu, a former defence minister, appeared to be on a mission to reaffirm ties between the countries as Russia's invasion of Ukraine has largely stalemated and Moscow has turned to North Korean soldiers to boost its troop numbers. China is not known to have directly provided military support to Russia, but has sold it dual-use technologies that could boost its ability to attack Ukrainian targets. China is also a major customer of Russian oil and gas amid international sanctions blocking Russia's access to global financial markets,

Weeks before Russia's February 2022 full-on invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Beijing and the sides signed a lengthy cooperation agreement pledging an unlimited partnership. The countries have held several joint military exercises and aligned their foreign policies to challenge the US-led liberal Western order. *—PTI*

Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu with Chinese Foreign Minister Want Yi *PHOTO: PTI*

TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

'Developing nations require $1T annually'

BAKU, 14 NOV

Negotiators at the UN climate conference in Azerbaijan should focus on mobilising USD 1 trillion per year by 2030 to help developing countries cope with the warming world and meet the Paris Agreement goals, a new report by the Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance said on Thursday.

This money, according to the group of international climate finance experts, is needed from both public and private sources.

It breaks down the USD 2.4 trillion needs for emerging markets and developing countries outside China as follows: USD 1.6 trillion for clean energy, USD 0.25 trillion for climate adaptation, USD 0.25 trillion for loss and damage, USD 0.3 trillion for sustainable agriculture and natural capital and USD 0.04 trillion for fostering a just transition.

This money, according to the group of international climate finance experts, is needed from both public and private sources *PHOTO: X*

The Independent High-Level Expert Group, co-chaired by climate finance experts Amar Bhattacharya, Vera Songwe, and Nicholas Stern, was formed to advise successive COP presidencies, starting with COP26.

"External finance from all sources, international public and private, along with others, will need to cover USD 1 trillion per year of the total investment needed by 2030 and around USD 1.3 trillion by 2035," the authors said.

They said that a fourfold increase in total climate finance and a sixfold increase in external finance by 2030 are necessary to keep pace with climate goals.

Developing countries have been pushing for an ambitious climate finance package that is publicly funded by developed countries, grant-based, concessional, supports their needs and priorities, and covers mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage from climate impacts.

Estimates indicate that developing and poorer countries will require trillions of dollars to adapt to and combat climate change in the coming years. *—PTI*

S AFRICA SAYS WON'T HELP 4,000 ILLEGAL MINERS INSIDE CLOSED MINE

JOHANNESBURG, 14 NOV

South Africa's government says it will not help 4,000 illegal miners inside a closed mine in the country's North West province who have been denied access to basic supplies as part of an official strategy against illegal mining.

The miners in the mineshaft in Stilfontein are believed to be suffering from a lack of food, water and other basic necessities after police closed off the entrances used to transport their supplies underground.

It is part of the police's Vala Umgodi, or Close the Hole, operation, which includes cutting off miners' supplies to force them to return to the surface and be arrested.

North West police spokesperson Sabata Mokgwabone said information received from those who recently helped bring three miners to the surface indicated an estimated 4,000 miners may be underground. Over 1,000 miners have surfaced at various mines in North West province, with many reported to be weak, hungry and sickly after going for weeks without basic supplies. Police continue on Thursday to guard areas around the mine to catch all those appearing from underground.

Cabinet Minister Khumbudzo Ntshavheni told reporters on Wednesday that the government would not send any help to the illegal miners because they are involved in a criminal act. *—PTI*

Gold slide continues, falls ₹700 to ₹77,050

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Gold prices saw yet another steep fall on Thursday, with the precious metal declining Rs 700 to Rs 77,050 per 10g in the national capital amid subdued demand trend in the global markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 77,750 per 10g in the previous session, a day after falling marginally by Rs 50 on Wednesday. Silver also plummeted Rs 2,310 to Rs 90,190 per kg against the previous close of Rs 92,500 per kg.Extending the losses for the fourth straight session, the price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell Rs 700 to Rs 76,650 per 10 grams. It had ended at Rs 77,350 per 10g on Wednesday.In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery plunged Rs 804. —*PTI*

Dr Reddy's fined ₹27L in Mexico for import violation

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Thursday said Mexico's drug regulator has imposed a fine of Rs 27 lakh on it for deviation from prescribed guidelines in filing intimation of import for a product. The drug regulatory body of Mexico has imposed a penalty of Rs 27 lakh on the company for deviation from prescribed guidelines in filing intimation of import of a reference standard for one of the APIs, the Hyderabad-based firm said in a regulatory filing. Additionally, the fine was imposed due to an error in the date of the invoice and also in the name of the reference standard versus import license, it added. Shares of Dr Reddy's Laboratories were trading 0.70 per cent down at Rs 1,237 apiece on BSE.—*PTI*

Swiggy shares slump 6% a day after market debut

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Shares of newly-listed food delivery and quick commerce major Swiggy declined nearly 6 per cent on day two of trading on Thursday. The stock tumbled 5.72 per cent to Rs 429.85 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it lost 8.18 per cent to Rs 418.65. On the NSE, shares of the firm ended at Rs 430.70, down 5.54 per cent. The company's market valuation eroded by Rs 5,842.35 crore to Rs 96,219.66 crore. On Wednesday, shares of Swiggy ended with a premium of nearly 17 per cent against the issue price of Rs 390. Swiggy's market cap had crossed Rs 1 lakh crore on the day of the listing of shares on the stock exchanges.The Rs 11,327-crore initial public offer of Swiggy got fully subscribed on the final day of the share sale on Friday, ending with 3.59 times subscription. The initial share sale had a price range of Rs 371-390 apiece. —*PTI*

Uber rolls out new features to better drivers' safety

MUMBAI, 14 NOV

Ride-hailing app Uber on Thursday announced a host of new features such as SOS integration, helmet selfie and women rider preference for female drivers - all aimed at making experience for million-plus drivers on its platform "safer, easier and fairer". Further, in support of the government's Code on Social Security (CoSS), which seeks to provide a safety net for gig workers, Uber announced the promotion of registrations on the e-Shram portal, which is a unified database for gig workers and unorganised workers. To encourage participation and accelerate such registrations, Uber is offering cash incentives to the first 10,000 drivers who register on the portal. Key enhancements for drivers include SOS integration, helmet selfie, women rider preference for female drivers, and audio recording, as also upfront tipping, instant payments, and mentorship programme.—*PTI*

Wholesale inflation rises to 4-month high of 2.36% in Oct

Inflation in food items shot up to 13.54 per cent in October

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Wholesale price inflation rose to a 4-month high of 2.36 per cent in October as prices of food items, especially vegetables, and manufactured goods turned dearer, as per the government data released on Thursday.

The wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation was 1.84 per cent in September 2024. It was (-) 0.26 per cent in October, last year.

As per the data, inflation in food items shot up to 13.54 per cent in October, as against 11.53 per cent in September. This was led by 63.04 per cent inflation in vegetables, as against 48.73 per cent in September.

Inflation in potato and onion remained high at 78.73 per cent and 39.25 per cent, respectively, in October.

Fuel and power category witnessed deflation of 5.79 per cent in October, against a deflation of 4.05 per cent in September. In manufactured items, inflation was 1.50 per cent in October, as against 1 per cent in the previous month.

The month of October witnessed the second consecutive month of rise in WPI inflation print. WPI higher than October's level was recorded last in June 2024, when it was 3.43 per cent.

Inflation in potato and onion remained high at 78.73 per cent and 39.25 per cent, respectively, in October *PHOTO: PTI*

- The wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation was 1.84 per cent in September 2024. It was (-) 0.26 per cent in October, last year.

"Inflation in October, 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, manufacture of food products, other manufacturing, manufacture of machinery & equipment, manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers & semi-trailers, etc." the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a statement on Thursday.

The consumer price index data released earlier this week showed retail inflation surged to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent with a sharp rise in prices of food items.

The level is higher than the upper tolerance limit of the Reserve bank of India (RBI), which may make cutting the benchmark interest rates difficult in the policy review meeting in December.

The RBI, which mainly takes into account retail inflation while framing monetary policy, kept benchmark interest rate or repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent in its monetary policy review last month. —*PTI*

RBI should cut rates: Goyal

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal urged RBI to cut interest rates and look through food price while deciding on monetary policy. This is the first time a government minister has backed calls to re-examine the nation's inflation targeting framework. He said it is an "absolutely flawed theory" to consider food inflation while deciding on rates. At the same Mumbai event on Thursday, Das said the change in monetary policy stance in October gives RBI the flexibility and optionality to act in sync with the evolving outlook but there was absolutely no scope to become complacent. —*Salar News with Agencies*

India's trade deficit hits $27.14 billion

The trade deficit for the April-October is $164.65 billion *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

India's trade deficit expanded to $27.14 billion in October 2024, reflecting a rise in imports despite an increase in exports. According to the latest government data, exports for the month surged by 17.26 per cent year-on-year to reach $39.2 billion. However, imports grew by 3.88 per cent to $66.34 billion. This resulted in a widening deficit compared to September 2024, when merchandise exports were $34.58 billion, and imports stood at $55.36 billion.

As reported by Trade Secretary Sunil Barthwal, India's total exports are projected to exceed $800 billion in the fiscal year ending March 2025. The government's strategy to target specific products and markets has been pivotal in boosting export performance.

In the first seven months of the fiscal year, engineering and electronics goods exports showed significant growth. Engineering exports rose to $67.49 billion, up from $61.5 billion a year ago, while electronics goods shipments grew to $19.07 billion from $15.42 billion. The merchandise trade deficit for the April-October period stood at $164.65 billion, a 10 per cent increase from $149.67 billion in the same period the previous year. Services exports in October were estimated at $34.02 billion, while imports were $17 billion, showing slight increases from September.

Notably, gold imports in October jumped to $7.13 billion from $4.39 billion in the previous month, while crude oil imports also rose significantly to $18.2 billion from $12.5 billion. —*Salar News with*

ON FII SELLING

Sensex drops 110 points, Nifty falls for 6th day

Broader NSE Nifty dropped by 26.35 points or 0.11 per cent to close at 23,532.70 *PHOTO: PTI*

MUMBAI, 14 NOV

Benchmark Sensex declined by 110 points in a see-saw trade on Thursday, marking its third straight session of losses amid continued FII selling, disappointing quarterly results and soaring inflation.

Benchmark BSE Sensex dropped 110.64 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at 77,580.31. During the day, it dropped 266.14 points or 0.34 per cent to 77,424.81.

Broader NSE Nifty dropped by 26.35 points or 0.11 per cent to close at 23,532.70, extending its losing streak to the sixth day.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Hindustan Unilever, NTPC, Nestle, IndusInd Bank, Power Grid, Adani Ports, Tata Motors and Bajaj Finserv were the major laggards.

Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra and HDFC Bank were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,502.58 crore on Wednesday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought shares worth Rs 6,145.24 crore, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower while Seoul ended in the positive territory.

Sensex tanked 984.23 points or 1.25 per cent to settle at 77,690.95 aon Wednesday. Registering its fifth day of decline, the Nifty tumbled 324.40 points or 1.36 per cent to 23,559.05. —*PTI*

Niva Bupa shares jump 6% in market debut

Shares of Niva Bupa Health Insurance Company Ltd, formerly Max Bupa Health Insurance Company, on Thursday listed with a premium of 6 per cent against the issue price of Rs 74. The stock made its debut at Rs 78.50, up 6 per cent on the BSE. It further jumped 9.37 per cent to Rs 80.94. At the NSE, it listed at Rs 78.14, a surge of 5.59 per cent from the issue price.The company's market valuation stood at Rs 14,069.93 crore.The initial public offering of Niva Bupa Health Insurance Company Ltd got subscribed 1.80 times on the closing day of share sale on Monday

SpiceJet clears $90.8M EDC debt

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

SpiceJet on Thursday said it has settled a USD 90.8 million dispute with Export Development Canada (EDC) for a total consideration of USD 22.5 million, leading to the airline taking ownership of 13 Q400 planes.

This resolution will result in savings of USD 68.3 million (Rs 574 crore), it said.

The crisis-hit airline, which recently raised Rs 3,000 crore, has also acquired the full ownership of 13 EDC-financed Q400 aircraft and the development will help in reducing operational costs.

PHOTO: PTI

In a release, the carrier said it has "fully settled a USD 90.8 million (Rs 763 crore) dispute with Export Development Canada (EDC) for a total of USD 22.5 million".

Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director of SpiceJet, said the resolution allows the airline to move forward with a strengthened balance sheet and focus on getting Q400 aircraft back into service as quickly as possible. Details about the airline's operational fleet could not be immediately ascertained. —*PTI*

S&P projects 6.5-7% growth for economy through 2027

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

S&P Global Ratings on Thursday projected the Indian economy to grow between 6.5-7 per cent annually in the three fiscal years till March 2027 as infrastructure spending and private consumption drive growth momentum.

In its global bank outlook report, S&P also said that good economic growth prospects will continue to support banks' asset quality, while healthy corporate balance sheets, tighter underwriting standards and improved risk management practices will further stabilise asset quality.

It said structural improvements and good economic prospects will support the resilience of India's financial institutions.

For the current fiscal, Reserve Bank has projected economic growth to be 7.2 per cent, lower than 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

It said higher demand coupled with stronger bank capitalisation will boost bank loan growth but deposit growth will lag.

"We project the banking sector's weak loans will decline to about 3 per cent of gross loans by 31 March, 2025, from our estimate of 3.5 per cent as of 31 March, 2024. This is on the back of healthy corporate balance sheets, tighter underwriting standards, and improved risk-management practices," it said.

S&P said corporate borrowing has gained momentum, but uncertain external conditions may delay capital expenditure-related growth. Deposits may struggle to keep pace, which would weaken credit-to-deposit ratios. —*ANI*

'INDIA TO DRIVE NEXT WAVE OF ASIA'S GROWTH'

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Economies like India are set to drive the next wave of Asia's growth as the China's contribution to the region's growth is set to decline, highlighted a report by Morgan Stanley.

The report noted that India, along with other emerging Southeast Asian economies like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia, will lead the next wave of growth in Asia.

According to the report, these four economies are expected to collectively account for 53 per cent of Asia's nominal GDP growth through 2027, a significant rise from 33 per cent in the pre-Covid years. —*ANI*

The JV will be one of the largest media & entertainment companies in India *PHOTO: PTI*

Reliance, Disney merger to form Rs 70,352cr JV

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Reliance Industries has completed the merger of its media assets with the India business of global media house Walt Disney to form a new joint venture (JV) worth Rs 70,352 crore.

The JV, in which Reliance Industries has invested Rs 11,500 crore (USD 1.4 billion) for its growth, will be headed by Nita Ambani as its Chairperson, according to a joint statement.

At the closing of the transactions, the said JV is controlled by RIL.

Reliance Industries holds a 16.34 per cent stake in the JV, while its step-down unit Viacom18 holds 46.82 per cent and Disney the rest 36.84 per cent.

Viacom 18 Media and The Walt Disney Company has already received necessary approvals required from authorities such as CCI, NCLT for the merger of the media and JioCinema businesses of media and JioCinema businesses of Viacom18 into Star India. The JV will be one of the largest media & entertainment companies in India with pro forma combined revenue of approximately Rs 26,000 crore (USD 3.1 billion) for the fiscal year ended in March 2024. The JV operates over 100 TV channels and produces more than 30,000 hours of TV entertainment content annually. The JioCinema and Hotstar digital platforms have an aggregate subscription base of over 50 million. The JV holds a portfolio of sports rights across cricket, football and other sports. —*PTI*

AFTER WORKERS' STRIKES

Boeing starts firing of 17,000 workers as financial troubles haunt firm

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Boeing initiated layoff notices this week as part of a company-wide effort to reduce its workforce by 17,000 employees, or approximately 10 per cent of its global staff. The job cuts, which were first announced in September, come as the aerospace giant grapples with ongoing financial challenges and a slowdown in production.

Employees in the United States who have received layoff notices will remain on Boeing's payroll until January, in compliance with federal regulations requiring a 60-day notice period. The layoffs are expected to affect workers across multiple departments as Boeing seeks to align its workforce with its current financial situation and refocus its business priorities.

The move follows a difficult year for the company, which has faced a series of setbacks, including disruptions in its production lines and a significant loss of revenue. Under new CEO Kelly Ortberg, Boeing has been working to recover from multiple crises, including the grounding of its 737 MAX aircraft and an industry-wide strike that halted production of most commercial jets.

Employees in the United States who have received layoff notices will remain on Boeing's payroll until January *PHOTO: X*

Boeing's flagship 737 MAX, a crucial source of revenue for the company, has been at the center of its recovery efforts. However, production of the aircraft has been hindered by a combination of supply chain issues and the effects of a strike by over 33,000 workers on the US West Coast. The strike, which began in September, brought operations at several of Boeing's plants to a standstill for weeks, significantly impacting the company's ability to meet production targets. The strike ended on November 5, with workers returning to the assembly lines, but the damage to Boeing's bottom line had already been done.

For the quarter ending 30 September, Boeing reported a loss of more than $6 billion, largely due to the strike's impact and related charges in both its commercial aircraft and defense programs. The company also faced significant challenges earlier this year, including a safety incident in January, when a 737 MAX jet suffered a mid-flight door panel failure.

In an effort to stabilize its finances, Boeing raised $24 billion in late October, seeking to protect its investment-grade credit rating and reassure stakeholders. Despite these efforts, morale among employees has been low, with many unsure whether their positions would be affected by the layoffs. Some workers have been anxiously awaiting news through phone calls or Zoom meetings to learn their fate.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Australia series makes you a better cricketer: Gambhir

PERTH, 14 NOV

A Test series against Australia is a transformative experience after which an individual "goes back a better cricketer" This is what head coach Gautam Gambhir and some of the senior players have shared with the younger members of the team on their first tour 'Down Under'. It will be a baptism by fire for several young Indian players, with the visitors naming as many as eight members in the squad who have never played a Test match on Australian soil. The likes of Yashaswi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Sarfaraz Khan, Nitish Reddy, Harshit Rana, Akash Deep, and Prasidh Krishna, all on their maiden tours will have plenty to prove during the marquee series, starting here from 22 November.And who better than the troika of Virat Kohli, Ravichandran Ashwin, and Jasprit Bumrah to share their invaluable learnings from the past series?.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Surya allowed me to bat at No. 3: Tilak Varma

CENTURION, 14 NOV

When Suryakumar Yadav knocked on Tilak Varma's hotel room door to inform that he would bat at number three in the third T20 International, the talented left-hander promised his skipper that he wouldn't let him down. Once he reached his 51-ball-century, second fifty coming in just 19 balls, Varma pointed towards the dug-out and blew a flying kiss to acknowledge his captain, who sacrificed his batting position for the youngster. "It was for 'SKY', our skipper because he gave me a chance to bat at number three," Varma told reporters after India's 11-run win in the third T20I against South Africa.—*PTI*

Spain-Poland opener at Billie Jean Finals postponed

MALAGA, 14 NOV

The first tie of the Billie Jean King Cup Finals between Spain and Poland was postponed on Wednesday because of a severe weather alert in the Malaga region, while the scheduled start of Japan vs. Romania on Thursday was moved back two hours. Organizers said the decision to postpone Wednesday's tie was "made based on guidance from the relevant authorities to ensure the health and safety of all participants and attendees." The first-round match between Spain and Poland will now be played on Friday when Germany will also face Britain.—*PTI*

PCB faces severe loss if CT row escalates

LONDON, 14 NOV

The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 is facing an uncertain future. The BCCI, after not receiving clearance from the Indian government, has informed the International Cricket Council (ICC) that it will not travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy in 2025. The Pakistan Cricket Board, the designated host, is adamant that there will be no hybrid model where India plays its matches at a neutral venue. The PCB has also shot off a letter to the ICC asking the world body to give in writing its and BCCI's stance. Moving or postponing the tournament could mean PCB losing out on approximately USD 65 million as host fees. Recently the PCB upgraded three venues.—*PTI*

Amid India row, ICC hints at Pak being CT host

ICC is said to have forwarded this communication to the PCB

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

Indian players celebrate after winning PHOTO: PTI

Amid ongoing tensions over India's reported refusal to travel to Lahore for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, the International Cricket Council (ICC) unveiled a promotional video for the tournament almost confirming Pakistan as the tournament host.

The promotional video indicates that Pakistan will host the eight-team men's Champions Trophy, marking the return of the tournament after an eight-year hiatus. The last edition, held in 2017, saw Pakistan defeat India in a memorable final to claim the title.

The ICC also revealed that the inaugural ICC Women's Champions Trophy will take place in Sri Lanka in 2027, featuring the top six T20 teams. This marks the beginning of a new era for the women's event, which will be played in the T20 format.

As part of the Champions Trophy's return, the ICC announced that the event will alternate every two years between the men's ODI format and the women's T20 format. ICC Chief Commercial Officer Anurag Dahiya commented on the new visual identity, saying, "The return of the men's

ICC Champions Trophy and the launch of a new women's event presented a unique opportunity to create a vibrant, high-energy visual identity.

The new branding reflects the competition's bold spirit, while incorporating elements like the distinctive white jackets, which nod to the tournament's storied history."

However, controversy surrounds India's stance on the 2025 Champions Trophy. Reports suggest that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has formally communicated to the ICC its refusal to send the Indian team to Pakistan for the event.

The ICC is said to have forwarded this communication to the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), which has since sought clarification from the governing body regarding India's official position. The diplomatic tensions between the two countries have added an additional layer of complexity to the tournament's organization.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

JAPAN MASTERS

Sindhu's campaign ends after losing to Michelle Li

KUMAMOTO, 14 NOV

Two-time Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu bowed out of the Kumamoto Masters Japan 2024, the BWF World Tour Super 500 series tournament, after losing to Canada's Michelle Li in the second round clash here on Thursday.

Sindhu, ranked 20 in the world, failed to continue the momentum in the match after winning the opening game against the Canadians. Michelle fought back strong in the final two games to win the thriller by 21-17, 16-21, 17-21 in one hour and 15 minutes.

Sindhu began strong, taking the first game 21-17. Both players displayed impressive control and precision, but Sindhu managed to edge ahead, using her attacking play to build a lead before the interval. After the break, she continued to press, ultimately winning the first game on her fourth game point. In the second game, however, Michelle responded with remarkable agility and sharp shot selection, taking control of the rallies to level the match at 21-16.

Her tactical adjustments disrupted Sindhu's rhythm and set up a decisive third game.The final game was a thriller, with Sindhu initially leading 4-1 and holding a narrow 11-9 advantage at the changeover. —*PTI*

Two-time Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu bowed out of the Kumamoto Masters Japan 2024

ATP FINALS

Alcaraz rallies past Rublev to revive hopes of reaching semis

TURIN, 14 NOV

The win put Alcaraz back into contention for a spot in the semifinals of the year-ending tournament for the top eight players after he was beaten by Casper Ruud in straight sets in his opener.

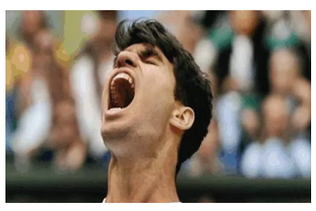
Top-ranked Jannik Sinner leads the other group ahead of Taylor Fritz, Daniil Medvedev, and Alex de Minaur.

The top two finishers in each round-robin group advance to the semifinals.

Alcaraz said after the Ruud match on Monday that he hadn't been feeling well and was "uncomfortable in the stomach." The Spaniard then cut short a practice session on Tuesday.

"I just tried to be focused on my game, on what I have to do, and forget about that I'm not feeling well, I'm sick and all that stuff," Alcaraz said.

Alcaraz wore a pink nose strip to help with his breathing. "It is something that I'm going to wear more often," he said. "I could recover better



Alcaraz PHOTO: X

between points."

Alcaraz produced several drop-shot winners, and on the occasions when Rublev did run down the short balls, the Spaniard hit winners into the open court on his next shot.

Late in the second set, Alcaraz even produced a drop-shot approach volley winner. In the second set tiebreaker, he saved two set points.

"I felt like the last month I couldn't hit good drops," said Alcaraz, who dropped behind Alexander Zverev to No. 3 in the rankings this week. "And I was thinking, What's going on?' You know, my style, my game is about playing this kind of shot... so I tried to do it today." —*PTI*

Zverev beats Ruud to continue a strong run

Two-time former champion Alexander Zverev, the world number two, underlined his superb late-season form by beating Norway's Casper Ruud 7-6(3), 6-3 for his second victory of the week at the ATP Finals on Thursday.Should Germany's Zverev beat Alcaraz to win the group and Rublev defeat Ruud, three players would end up with one victory meaning sets and games would come into play to separate them.The way Zverev is playing he will take some stopping.

—*AP*

Ranji Trophy: Shami could be flown to Aus after taking 4 in 19 Ranji overs

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

RThe beleaguered Indian team could get the Mohammed Shami boost during the challenging Australia tour after the pace-bowling stalwart made an impressive comeback from injury by grabbing four wickets in a Ranji Trophy match on Thursday.

Playing his first red-ball game in more than a year, Shami, who represents Bengal, bowled four spells across 57 overs in Madhya Pradesh's first innings and returned with figures of 19-4-54-4.

His victims included MP skipper Shubham Sharma, all-rounder Saransh Jain, and two tail-enders, with three of the four batters being bowled while one edged to keeper Wriddhiman Saha.While this is great news for the Indian team, it is understood that the national selection committee will look at how his body holds up in the second innings as well as whether there is any swelling or pain at the end of the contest, being played at the Holkar Stadium in Indore.If he ticks all the boxes, it is almost

Mohammed Shami PHOTO: PTI

assured that he will join forces with pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah before the second Test, which will be a day/night affair.

The Ranji Trophy match ends on November 16 and he could join the squad before the first Test, beginning in Perth on November 22, but that could be cutting it too fine.In case Shami goes, he will get to play a two-day day/night practice game against Prime Minister's XI.

More than the wickets he took on Thursday, the team management and national selection committee along with the BCCI's Sports Science & Medical Team want to check how his body holds up. —*PTI*

Focus on Rinku's form as India aims series win

JOHANNESBURG, 14 NOV

Rinku Singh's batting slot and circumspect approach must be a cause of concern for the India team going into the deciding fourth T20I against South Africa as the side aims for another bilateral series victory here Friday.

Centuries by Sanju Samson and Tilak Varma on either side of an inept batting performance have kept India's nose ahead in the series and the team would want a more collective batting effort to clinch it 3-1.

The Wanderers 'Bull Ring' has always been a happy hunting ground for India, where they won the 2007 T20 World Cup final against Pakistan. Even during the previous T20I series a year back, skipper Suryakumar Yadav's last international hundred to date came at this very stadium, and that too in a winning cause. The Indian captain, who enjoys a staggering victory percentage of 81.25, having come up trumps in 13 out of the 16 matches, would like to do one better compared to the last series in the Rainbow Nation which had ended in a 1-1 draw with one game being washed out.

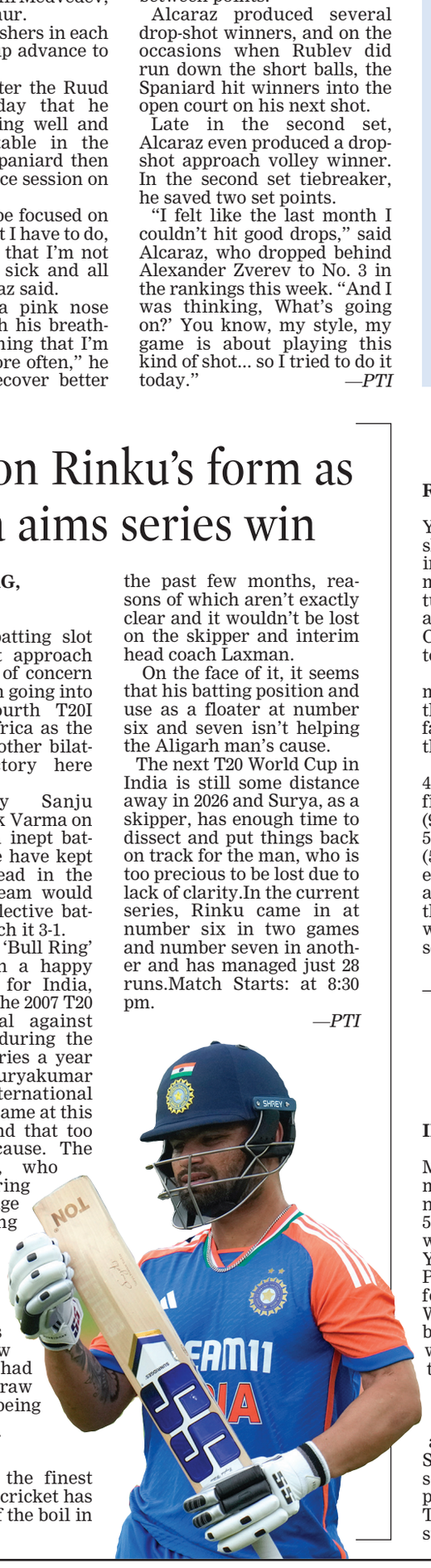
Curious Case of Rinku Singh

Rinku, one of the finest exponents of T20 cricket has suddenly gone off the boil in the past few months, reasons of which aren't exactly clear and it wouldn't be lost on the skipper and interim head coach Laxman.

On the face of it, it seems that his batting position and use as a floater at number six and seven isn't helping the Aligarh man's cause.

The next T20 World Cup in India is still some distance away in 2026 and Surya, as a skipper, has enough time to dissect and put things back on track for the man, who is too precious to be lost due to lack of clarity.In the current series, Rinku came in at number six in two games and number seven in another and has managed just 28 runs.Match Starts: at 8:30 pm.

—*PTI*



Deepika scores five goals in India's win

RAJGIR, 14 NOV

Young striker Deepika slammed five goals as defending champions India thrashed minnows Thailand 13-0 to virtually assure a semifinal berth at the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Thursday.

It was a completely one-sided match as the Indians found the net at will, with Thailand failing to take a single shot at the opposition goal.

Deepika (3rd, 19th, 43rd 45th, 45th minutes) found the net five times, while Preeti Dubey (9th, 40th), Lalremsiami (12, 56th), and Manisha Chauhan (55th, 58th) scored a brace each.Beauty Dung Dung (30th) and Navneet Kaur (53rd) were the other goal-getters for India who registered their third consecutive win in the round-robin league stage.

Indian players celebrate after winning PHOTO: PTI

India had earlier defeated Malaysia 4-0 before eking out a close 3-2 win over South Korea.

The Indians will next play Olympic silver medallists in China on Saturday.

India is now in the second spot in the standings with nine points, the same as China who, however, are on the top on the basis of a better goal difference. China has a goal difference of + 21 as against +18 of India.

The top four teams out of six at the end of the round-robin league stage will qualify for the semifinals. —*PTI*

Australia's pace flattened Pakistan

BRISBANE, 14 NOV

Glenn Maxwell's robust 43 off 19 balls helped Australia thump Pakistan by 29 runs in a rain-shortened first Twenty20 on Thursday.

After a nearly three-hour delay due to lightning and rain, the match was shortened to seven overs per side. Maxwell powered Australia to 93-4 and Pakistan reached only 64-9 after slumping to 16-5 inside the first 15 balls.Nathan Ellis (3-9) and Xavier Bartlett (3-13) ran through the top order before No. 8 batter Abbas unbeaten 20.Australia 93 for 4 (Maxwell 43, Stoinis 21*, Afridi 2-9) beat Pak 64 for 9 (Afridi 20*, Ellis 3-9, Bartlett 3-13) by 29 runs. —*PTI*

PRO-FIGHT IN TEXAS

Won't lose: Tyson on fight with Jake Paul

IRVING, 14 NOV

Mike Tyson wasn't in the mood for talking in the final news conference before the 58-year-old former heavyweight champion faced YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul. Tyson had terse answers for all the questions Wednesday night, two nights before the fight against Paul, who is 31 years younger, at the home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys. The issue of Tyson's health didn't come up in a small concert venue about 20 miles from AT&T Stadium. A bout originally scheduled for 20 July was postponed to Friday night after Tyson had to be treated for a stomach ulcer when he fell ill on a flight. Tyson said in a documentary promoting the fight that he lost 26 pounds while recovering, but Nakisa Bidarian, co-founder with Paul of Most Valuable Promotions, said Tyson had been cleared medically for weeks. Bidarian also said Tyson was going through the same regular medical check-ups as any sanctioned pro-fight in Texas. Several states wouldn't sanction the bout. Texas agreed to a fight that was eight rounds instead of 10 or 12, with two-minute rounds instead of three, and heavier gloves designed to lessen the power of punches. —*PTI*

Jake Paul and Mike Tyson PHOTO: X

A FIGHT OF TWO GENERATIONS

WHO ARE THE FIGHTERS?

- Michael Gerard Tyson, 58, is an American professional boxer
- Jake Paul, 27, is an American YouTuber-turned-boxer

WHEN AND WHERE?

- Match will be held on 15 Nov at 6.30pm
- **VENUE:** Texas' AT& T Stadium
- Will be streamed on Netflix
- It is the first combat sports event to be streamed on Netflix
- Paul has bet his entire $40 million purse claiming that he will defeat Tyson